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# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

□ PAST & PRESENT □



Our cover illustration shows a reconstructed member of Jeff Davis's Mississippi Rifles, the famous Mexican War volunteer unit — see article p 8

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# EDITORIAL

Our report on reconstructed medieval siege engines in Czechoslovakia comes to us from **Leonid Krizek**, a freelance writer and translator living in Prague. Born in 1947, Mr. Krizek was by training a typographer; he worked, during the years of the Communist regime, on a number of 'unofficial' publications including the long-running *Acta Incognitorum* (1976-89), and was active in short-lived military/historical publishing ventures, having a long time interest in military collection and antique weapons.

**David E. Spencer**, who has waited far longer than he should have had to, is the co-author of our article on the little-reported operations of Portuguese paratroops in the Angola, Mozambique and Guinea campaigns of the 1960s and '70s. A research fellow with a 'think tank' in Washington, DC, specialising in Latin American studies, his experience includes many years living and studying throughout Latin America, and National Guard service as a senior NCO in the anti-armour platoon of a unit of 29th Light Infantry Division. His colleague in this article is **Captain Miguel A. G. da Silva Machado**, a serving officer with the Portuguese Air Force paratroops, and co-author of *Boina Verde* No. 158 of summer 1991, the special issue of that branch's magazine which provided a 25th anniversary historical review.

## New regiments

Further to our note in the Editorial of 'M' No. 40, the new titles of some of the amalgamated regiments of the reduced British Army have recently been announced — so far, only those of the Royal Armoured Corps and the



David Spencer



Miguel Machado



Leonid Krizek

supporting Corps. (A TV report that the amalgamated Queen's and Royal Hampshire Regiments were to be retitled *The Princess of Wales's Own Regiment* was premature, according to Army PROs.) On 11 February the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Archie Hamilton, announced the following:

*The Royal Dragoon Guards* — ex-4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards and 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

*The Queen's Royal Hussars (The Queen's Own and Royal Irish)* — ex-The Queen's Own Hussars and The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars.

*The King's Royal Hussars* — ex-The Royal Hussars and 14th/20th King's Hussars.

*The Light Dragoons* — ex-13th/18th Royal Hussars and 15th/19th The King's Royal Hussars.

*The Queen's Royal Lancers* — ex-16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers and 17th/21st Lancers.

A new *Royal Logistic Corps* will combine the Royal Corps of Transport,

Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Royal Pioneer Corps, Army Catering Corps, and Postal & Courier Service of the Royal Engineers.

A second supporting Corps, whose title has yet to be announced, will combine the former Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers with other elements.

The most radical of these steps, organisationally, is of course the new RLC; traditionally, it is the revival of the old Light Dragoon title for former Hussars, reversing the retitling adopted early in the 19th century. We will print further information as it is announced.

## Errata

Reader Allan D. Satin, and others, point out that the Franz Adam sketches in 'M' No. 45, p.30 item B are miscaptioned, and in fact show the headdress and uniform of a Württemberg Reiter Regiment, probably No. 1.

On p. 41 of the same issue, the photo (E) of a Turkish Standard Bearer 'flat' shown at the 1991 Chicago Show was

misattributed to Jim Woodley — our apologies.

## NAM Gallery Talks

A series of free half-hour illustrated talks on English Civil War subjects will be given at the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea in the coming weeks; interested visitors should assemble in the foyer — the talks begin at 1.15p.m. Subjects are: the English buff-coat (Wed. 1 April), Sir Arthur Heselrigge (Wed. 8 April) researching a Civil War regiment (Wed. 15 April), garrison life (Wed. 29 April), Sir Ralph Hopton and Sir William Waller (Thurs. 7 May), siege warfare (Thurs. 14 May), uniforms and colours (Thurs. 21 May), and artillery (Thurs. 28 May).

## BMSS Annuals

The British Model Soldier Society Annual Competitions will be held on Saturday 11 April at Wandsworth Town Hall, London. As usual, there will be non-competitive displays and trade stands to attract the non-member visitors, as well as the full range of competition classes open to members.

## MFAA Exhibit and Mart

We are asked to note that the Military Figure Collectors of America will hold their 51st anniversary exhibit and mart at Valley Forge Convention Center, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania on Friday and Saturday 1 and 2 May. Competitions, displays and trade stalls will be held in a spacious venue, with two hotels on site, close to the shopping and tourist complex of King of Prussia. For details contact MFCA51, 315 South 6th St., Philadelphia, PA 19106.

MT

# THE AUCTION SCENE

For the auction houses January is usually a rather 'hung-over' month, with few sales and a somewhat sluggish feel to the market. There was a sale of model soldiers at Phillips, and one of militaria at Wallis & Wallis. Contrary to general expectations the results appeared to offer a gleam of hope that, at last, things might be looking up for the trade and collectors. The sale at Wallis & Wallis in Lewes on 7 January was so soon after Christmas that one might have predicted a somewhat disappointing result; but to the general surprise and no doubt delight of the auctioneers and many others the opposite was the case, with over 80% of the lots sold and some very good prices realised. Coupled with the good results from the pre-Christmas Military Sale at Sotheby's, could this mean that the market is picking up? We will have to await the results of more sales before any firm conclusions can be drawn.

When reporting on the Sotheby's sale one point of interest to which attention was drawn were the high prices realised by British Army badges. Despite the damage done to the collecting of badges by the constantly increasing number of restrikes and absolute fakes which appear on the market, badges still appear to appeal to the collector. This trend seems to be established, for similar good results were achieved at

the Wallis sale. Another surprising feature was the interest shown in buttons — not so very long ago the province of small boys with extremely limited pocketmoney; in many sales they were sold in quantity by weight. If the prices in this sale are any indication then the day of the button is at hand. One good collection sold for a total of £8,800, or an average of £92 a lot. One group of 32 Royal Artillery and Volunteer buttons sold for £220, and another lot of eight pre-service Corps officers' gilt buttons went for £135.

Headress badges did well, and a collection of blue cloth helmet plates of the Volunteer Engineers sold at prices ranging from £65 to £170. One very unusual lot comprising 137 Second World War cloth insignia and divisional signs achieved the amazing figure of £500. Whether it was the badges themselves or the backing to which they were attached that generated such a high price is not clear: they were sewn into the inside lining of an other rank's Women's Royal Naval Service jacket. The possible explanations for this rather strange combination are numerous... Apart from this entertaining speculation, this is yet another indication of the growing interest in the commoner Second

World War II items.

It would be interesting to know how many of these lots went to one or two buyers or if there were a number of bidders. Modern auctioneering practice prevents this: in the old days auction houses published price lists giving the figure at which the lot sold and also the name of the purchaser. Obviously this created problems for the dealer, as his buying price was there for all to see; his mark-up had to be limited, otherwise informed customers were inclined to remonstrate. Today the published price lists simply give the prices realised, including any commission charges, and no names of purchasers are shown; even bidders in the sale room are often unaware of the purchaser's identity. Many auction rooms now operate the paddle system: everybody planning to bid registers as they enter the room, and is then issued with a large numbered paddle. When bidding they simply show the number, and after a successful bid the auctioneer calls out the paddle number as their only identification. The sales staff are the only ones able to link number and name, and they are generally very discreet.

Medals, as always, seem to hold their prices, and this sale was no exception. There were also some very

good prices achieved in the book section. Copies of the British Army badge collector's Bible, the two volumes by Kipling & King, *Head-dress Badges of the British Army*, sold at over £40 a volume, and similar reference books did as well.

In general the condition of items offered for sale is of prime importance, and whole excavated material does not usually attract a great deal of interest, there are occasions when this generalisation does not apply. This sale contained some excavated material from Fort George on the island of Grenada in the West Indies, the scene of fighting between the French and English. It comprised badges, buttons and similar relics. The material had been described in various issues of the *Journal of the Military Historical Society*, and this no doubt helped develop interest, for most of the material sold well. Provenance and written reference always increase the interest and consequently the selling potential of any object.

In February there is the Park Lane Arms Fair, a rather prestigious event with the emphasis on the higher priced items. For the average collector is usually a matter of looking rather than hying. The attendance may give another pointer as to how the market is going, but at the moment it seems that Europeans are spending more than Americans.

**Video Releases to Buy:**  
**'Cyrano de Bergerac'**

(Artificial Eye: PG)

**'Andrei Rublev'** (Artificial Eye: 15)

**'The Seven Samurai'**

(Connoisseur: PG)

**'Throne of Blood'**

(Connoisseur: PG)

**'Aguirre, Wrath of God'**

(Palace Video: 15)

While the majority of video releases are aimed at a mass audience, it has been encouraging to see that an increasing number of foreign language films are becoming available for purchase. Several recent releases have a historical content that will be of interest to readers of *MI*.

Jean-Paul Rappeneau's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1990) was the most expensive film in French history, and the most successful French film ever shown in the UK. The story is based on Edmond Rostand's popular 19th century play about a poet-cum-playwright who lived in Paris some two centuries earlier. The romantic Cyrano can only express his love for his cousin Roxanne by writing love letters on behalf of Christian de Neville, the man she really loves. Cyrano is sensitive about the remarkable length of his nose; as an accomplished swordsman he is quick to fight duels with or otherwise humiliate anyone he suspects of passing comments.

The film has many pleasures, not least of which is a witty script whereby the subtitles, translated by Alan Burgess, are, like the original play, written in verse. The film also features magnificent photography, a rich score, and an enjoyable performance by Gerard Depardieu in the title role.

The several sword-fights are vividly staged; and there is a spectacular battle-scene, filmed with hundreds of extras in Hungary, depicting an incident in the 'Thirty Years' War. Cyrano and Christian have joined the Gascony cadets commanded by Carbon de Castel-Jaloux who are besieging

Spanish forces at Arras (1640). The Gascons find themselves on the defensive when they are unexpectedly attacked by a superior Spanish force. In a frontal assault, the Spanish fill the defensive ditch with fascines and ascend the earthworks using scaling-ladders: the scene gives a vivid impression of 17th century warfare. The film won several awards including an Oscar for Best Costumes. An Oscar is no guarantee of accuracy; but the film is vastly entertaining and highly recommended.

Artificial Eye's catalogue also includes *Andrei Rublev*, Andrei Tarkovsky's film about the great 15th century Russian icon painter. The film was completed in 1966, but was shelved by the Soviet authorities who considered it to be too 'dark' for the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. It was first screened in this country in a cut version in 1973, but this video release is the full three-hour version. The film's eight episodes paint a grim picture of medieval Russia: in the segment called 'The Raid' a blood-thirsty band of Tatars wreak havoc on an unsuspecting village. However, the stark monochrome photography finally

gives way to a magnificent colour montage sequence depicting the real Rublev's icons.

Connoisseur Video have released two classics by the Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. *The Seven Samurai* (1954) concerns a small farming community who are regularly forced to relinquish their harvest to brutal bandits. In desperation they persuade an impoverished samurai warrior (Takashi Shimura), along with six others (including Toshiro Mifune), to organise their defence before the bandits return. The climax is a brilliantly realised battle in the rain. The film is justly considered to be one of the great classics of world cinema, and provided the inspiration for John Sturges' Western *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), as well as films set in Ancient Rome (*The Invincible Seven*), Vietnam, and even Outer Space (*Battle Beyond the Stars*).

Shimura and Mifune also appear in *Throne of Blood* (1957), which is loosely based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and is set during Japan's civil wars of the 16th century. A samurai (Mifune) is per-

*A striking battle sequence from Cyrano de Bergerac. (Artificial Eye)*



**'Eyewitness at Wounded Knee'** by Richard E. Jensen, R. Eli Paul & John E. Carter; University of Nebraska Press; 206pp; 150 b/w photographs; index; £29.95

The unparalleled impact of black and white photographs in recalling this period of history is admirably demonstrated by the 150 images which justify the book's title. They are accompanied by three authoritative essays. Richard Jensen provides a detailed narrative of the Ghost Dance and the Wounded Knee massacre from the Indian viewpoint. A wealth of sources permits fresh examination of such points as the identification of the holy man whose actions preceded the tragedy. R. Eli Paul accurately documents the army's newfound role as a mobile policing force abetted by railroad and telegraph. John Carter puts the photos into context with an original study of the photographers, for whom the massacre represented a potential goldmine. All display a refreshing distrust of familiar sources and accepted falsehoods; for example, in revealing an image frequently labelled as Sioux chief Young Man Afraid of His Horses to be that of

a lesser known but more photogenic Kiowa Indian.

After an extensive essay on the photographers, it seems a shame that little effort is made to credit the subsequent photographs to their individual creators. Indeed, while excellent quotes and narratives accompany the images, there are occasional frustrating omissions in describing their content; for example on p.122, where the original, barely decipherable caption is thought sufficient to accompany a line-up of chiefs and US officials.

The images themselves, though, are beautifully reproduced, with many unpublished photos and some striking enlargements. While a Remington painting must necessarily suffice in representing the unphotographed battle, its theatre and players, the prelude and aftermath are vividly depicted: soldiers and civilians clustered about their Pine Ridge photographer, shutter release in hand; Indian bodies frozen into grotesque poses beside a mass

grave; Troop B, 7th Cavalry, their ranks decimated by 'friendly fire'; Sioux, heads bowed, beside a male relic hunter obviously wearing an Indian woman's pillaged dress. The wealth of photographs create an invaluable and evocative source.

JH

**'An Historical Guide to Arms and Armour'** by Stephen Bull, ed. Tony North; Cassell; 224pp; 300 illus (col, b/w); biblio, index; £17.95

This is a 'coffee-table' book with numerous colour photographs, which takes the reader on a tour through the history of armour and weapons from the Ancient Greeks to the early years of the 19th century.

The book is authoritatively written. The author has been a curator in two military museums and is a member of the Arms and Armour Society, as well as contributing articles to magazines such as this one. Tony North has worked in the Metalwork Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum for

sued by his wife and a spirit to murder his friend (Minori Chiaki) and lord (Shimura). Among the film's many unforgettable images are the advance of a vast army on Cobweb Castle (the equivalent of Birnam Wood rising to Dunsinane), and Mifune's extraordinary death, riddled by arrows fired by his own men who realise his actions have doomed them as well. Kurosawa evidently saw parallels between feudal Britain and feudal Japan; 28 years later he filmed *Ran*, based on Shakespeare's *King Lear* (reviewed *MI* No. 9).

Werner Herzog's *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (1974) is set in 1560 when a Spanish conquistador expedition led by Gonzalez Pizarro crosses the Peruvian sierras in search of the legendary Inca city of El Dorado. The film opens as Pizarro sends a reconnaissance party down river by raft under the command of Don Pedro de Ursua, with Don Lope de Aguirre (Klaus Kinski) as second-in-command. The mission proves to be fraught with dangers; the rafts are caught in whirlpools, and there is a battle at night with Indians. When Ursua decides to turn back, Aguirre leads a mutiny and declares a nobleman in the party to be in command. However, their troubles are not over. The party, weakened by hunger and casualties, are being watched from the banks by Indians who are all too evidently cannibals.

This is no Hollywood style action-adventure, but more a study of madness and the disintegration of command. Herzog's mesmeric visual style is augmented by landscape photography which simultaneously evokes beauty, mystery and danger: finally the camera glides across the water to reveal Aguirre alone on a raft littered with corpses and overrun by tiny monkeys. The film also features a memorable performance by Klaus Kinski in the title role, and a haunting score by Popul Vih.

Stephen J. Greenhill

## BOOK REVIEWS

many years and is well respected in the world of arms and armour. The book is very attractively presented (despite some photographs having been reproduced in reverse) and well laid out.

The first five chapters deal with the history of arms and armour in Europe. In each chapter the text explains the development of armour in relationship to changes in weaponry and tactics, describing the main lines of development and tracing the main changes in the style of warfare encountered in each century. The full captions augment the text. Rather than following developments in Europe, each of the last two chapters deals with a theme: that on Oriental arms and armour takes in Japan, China, India, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas; the final chapter covers the role of arms and armour in sport, both in the sense of hunting and in the tournament, with its specialised armour and blunted arms. Tony North provides a useful introduction to the decorating of armour, although a little more information on manufacturing techniques would have been beneficial.

continued on p.49



# American Forces in the War with Mexico, 1846-48:

## (5) The State Volunteers

ROSS M. KIMMEL

The citizen-soldier has been an icon in the American pantheon of civic virtue since colonial days, when Private Yankee Doodle Dandy 'stuck a feather in his hat and called it 'macaroni'. When the War with Mexico came the number of troops in the US forces went from the 8,000 of the pre-war regular army to 103,000, 73,000 of them short-term (some as short as six months) volunteers raised in the various states. And of the 23,000 men added to the regular army, many went into new units created for a mere three years or 'for the war'. Everyone's expectation was that when the crisis passed all but the original 8,000 professional regulars would, Cincinnatus-like, return to their shops and ploughs.

This system of raising short-term volunteers had served America well enough since colonial times, when the total lack of a standing force meant reliance on the militias for local defence. When troops were needed for offensive action, as during the French and Indian War, the provinces raised short-term volunteer companies. During the Revolution the need for a regular force was palpable, and while Congress established a few national regiments, it relied chiefly on a system of state regiments taken into the Continental establishment. When hostilities ceased the officer corps resigned *en masse* and the troops demobilized quickly.

So ingrained was the traditional Anglo-American distrust of a standing army that the post-Revolutionary regular forces at one point sank to fewer than 100 men. Some of the ultra-democrats, like Thomas Jefferson, advocated a total abandonment of a peacetime army and reliance on state militias for defence. However, sporadic friction with Britain, and to a lesser extent France, was a reminder of the necessity

for a regular force. During the War of 1812 Congress raised the regular army to 34,000, and this force was often augmented during certain campaigns by state militia. The Indian wars of the early 19th century

were sufficiently small and local that regular US forces, again sometimes augmented by state militia, sufficed without resort to large-scale mobilization. The War with Mexico, however, was a comparatively large war, and the first undertaken by the US outside its national boundaries, involving long offensives deep inside enemy territory. This required raising the largest US army yet. While there was some expansion of the regular forces, the bulk of troops were to be short-term state volunteers.

### RAISING THE VOLUNTEERS

President James K. Polk and Congress initially authorized 50,000 state volunteers to be taken into US service. The governors of the several states, in concert with the state legislatures, put out the calls to arms. Companies were raised in various locales, usually rallying around prominent men who could expect to receive commissions. Companies rendezvoused with others and were formed into battalions and regiments. The number of regiments from each state was generally proportionate to

both the population of the state, and to its degree of affiliation with the Democratic Party. The latter usually reflected geography, the more southern or western a state the more Democratic, and thus the more likely its people to flock to arms.

The federal government at first required the state troops to provide their own clothing, weapons and accoutrements, however, came from federal arsenals.

### Election of officers

A peculiarly American trait at this time was the selection of volunteer officers by balloting the soldiers; this practice stretched back at least as far as the Revolution, and would continue through the Civil War. It was, of course, the ultimate expression of American democratic ideals; but it often resulted in disastrous leadership.

In some states only the company officers were elected, the field officers being appointed by the state governor. This could usually be relied upon to produce quality regimental officers, as in the case of Virginia's 12-company infantry regiment. The governor and council appointed



#### See also:

'MI' No. 40 — Part 1 — the course of the war, and contemporary photographs and eyewitness paintings.

'MI' No. 42 — Part 2 — Procurement supply, and campaign appearance of Regular troops; illustrations of infantry uniforms and accoutrements.

'MI' No. 44 — Part 3 — Mounted branch uniforms illustrated and described.

'MI' No. 45 — Part 4 — Artillery, Engineers, Ordnance uniforms illustrated and described.

Daguerreotype of Private William Hall, Co. B, Virginia Regiment, showing him in clothing conforming almost precisely to the dark blue uniform authorized for the unit. The vest, however, would be a private purchase item. Hall was an illiterate 22-year-old shoemaker when he enlisted at Alexandria, Va., on 1 December 1846. He served with his unit until it returned to the state in August 1848 and was disbanded. (Courtesy Dale Snair)

three West Pointers — John Francis Hamtramck, Thomas Beverly Randolph, and the future Confederate general Jubal Anderson Early — as colonel, lieutenant-colonel, and major respectively <sup>(1)</sup>. In other states the field officers were elected by the company officers <sup>(2)</sup>.

Company officers were elected by their enlisted men. Usually the socially prominent, who had organized the companies, could expect to be elected, but such was not always the case. Samuel E. Chamberlain, who began his Mexican War service as an Illinois volunteer sergeant, recounted this company officer election speech:

'Fellow citizens! I am Peter Goff, the Butcher of Middletown! I am! I am the man that shot that sneaking, white livered Yankee son of a bitch abolitionist Lovejoy! I did! I want to be your Captain. I do; and I will serve the yellow-bellied Mexicans the same. I will! I have treated you to fifty dollars worth of whiskey, I have, and when elected Captain, I will spend fifty more, I will!'

'It is needless to state he was elected almost unanimously,' Chamberlain concluded <sup>(3)</sup>.

#### Character of the Volunteers

Volunteers and their elected officers could present a comic spectacle. A German-born newspaper writer who joined the Illinois troops wrote of what he saw as his fellow volunteers rendezvoused at Alton:

'My brothers-in-arms are thus far, at least, no experts in the art of dealing with weapons, and their uniforms mere makeshifts. Colonels wandering around in shabby frocks and in very inadequate trousers... many a captain is commanding his company with a drawn walking-stick, indeed, I even saw one with his shirt-sleeves rolled up leading his men into the presence of the colonel' <sup>(4)</sup>.

As might be expected, volunteer troops with elected officers did not make for disciplined troops. Sam Chamberlain, now a trooper in the 1st US Dragoons, recounted



Rear view of the reconstructed rifleman of a Washington company of the District of Columbia and Maryland Volunteers — see colour photograph (B).

ed this vignette, which occurred as he and the other dragoons were serving as personal escort to Gen. John E. Wool, commander of a volunteer division:

'As we approached the guard line, a 'Sucker' <sup>(5)</sup> on post was seated on the ground with a roguish looking Senorita, engaged in eating *frijoles* and *pan de maiz*. The sentinel coolly eyed the cavalcade, and with no thoughts of rising to salute, he remarked, 'God day, General, hot riding out I reckon.' The General thundered out, 'Call the officer of the guard!' The man just raised himself on his elbow and drawled out, 'Lieutenant Woodson, come here right quick, post nine, for the old General wants you!' The officer of the guard made his appearance without belt or sword, coat unbuttoned and a

straw hat on. The General gave him a severe reprimand for his own appearance as well as the unsoldierlike conduct of the guard, whereupon the officer broke out, 'Jake Strout, yer ain't worth shucks. If yon don't git right up and salute the General, I'll drive your gal away, doggone if I don't.' <sup>(6)</sup>

#### Polyglotism

One interesting fact about the volunteers is the number of foreign-born among them, principally in units from the high-immigrant states of the north-east and old north-west. A period publication about the New York volunteers averred:

'The New York Regiment consisted of about eight hundred rank and file, three hundred Americans, the balance Dutch, Irish, French, English, Poles, Swedes, Chinese, Indians, etc., there were not one hundred men and officers ever born in the City of New York in the whole regiment' <sup>(7)</sup>.

A German volunteer in an Illinois company calling itself

the Texan Guards observed:

'Among [the company's] 94 members there are only 19 Americans, the rest being Germans. Among the officers, only the first lieutenant is a native. Since our former Captain Morrison has been appointed major, the captivity is filled by Julius Raith, likewise a German, so that the heroic deeds which the Texan Guards are determined to carry out will rebound to the honour of the German name, and to the humiliation of the natives' <sup>(8)</sup>.

An analysis of a randomly selected company of Ohioans (Co. K, 4th Ohio Volunteers) reveals that, of 88 men listed, 81 with birthplaces noted, only ten were native-born. Sixty came from various German states, seven from France, and one each from Ireland, Hungary, and Switzerland <sup>(9)</sup>.

#### Riots and Mutinies

Fractional and high-spirited, the volunteers frequently rioted and mutinied. On 28 July 1846 the Baltimore-Washington Battalion and the 1st Ohio Regiment drew battle lines opposite one another, with arms and loaded cartridge boxes, in a dispute over a catfish caught in the Rio Grande and claimed by soldiers of each unit. Quick action by officers of both units, who interposed themselves between the lines, prevented bloodshed <sup>(10)</sup>. The same Captain Goff, whose shiskey-laden overtures had gotten him elected to his rank caused a mutiny among the 'Suckers' even before they left their home state. In a drunken stupor one day, he decked two privates, and then, to show his impartiality, sent a lieutenant 'to the grass'. It did not help that most of his men were drunk, too, perhaps having imbibed too freely of the captain's proffered election spirits. They drew arms and ammunition, and prepared for a grand mêlée. The intercession of officers, including Gen. Wool, quelled things short of disaster <sup>(11)</sup>.

A fretful Maj. Jubal Early of the Virginia Regiment, while in command of a detachment quartered at Fort Monroe, wrote to Col. Hamtramck on

15 January 1847:

'I would prefer that an Officer older than myself should take command of the Detachment which is here, as the business of *buking* such men as the companies here are composed of to the usages of the Service is a very serious undertaking, and could be better calculated to command respect and obedience than mine is' <sup>(12)</sup>.

Maj. Early's agitation proved prophetic. In the summer of 1847, near Buena Vista, out of ennui brought about by lack of activity, the Virginians precipitated, then joined in, a mutiny by North Carolina troops who were oppressed by a martinet of a commander. This affray lasted several days, and before it was over some Mississippians got involved, shots were fired, one man was killed, and others wounded <sup>(13)</sup>.

#### Atrocities

The unruliness of the volunteers was not confined to their own kind: it inevitably spilled

over on to the civilian population of Mexico, with far more sanguinary results. Dragoon regular Sam Chamberlain was especially critical of Col. Archibald Yell's regiment of Arkansas cavalry and Col. Humphrey Marshall's Kentucky cavalry and Col. Humphrey Marshall's Kentucky cavalry:

'Their impatience of all restraint, the egotism made them worse than useless on Picket, while in camp they were a perfect nuisance. They would visit the Ranchs and, looking upon the 'greasers' as belonging to the same social class as their own Negro slaves, they plundered and ill-treated them, and outraged the women, and this sometimes in the presence of the fathers and husbands, who were tied up and flogged for daring to interfere in these amuzements of the chivalry [sic]. This made work for us Dragoons, for we were obliged to patrol the whole country for miles

around camp to protect the wretched inhabitants and arrest these heroes' <sup>(14)</sup>.

Sam witnessed a massacre of Mexican citizens by, principally, Yell's cavalry in retaliation for the guerrilla assassination of an American picket. Sent by Gen. Wool to investigate a disturbance, Sam and a dragoon detail found their way to a cave where:

'... we found a 'greaser' shot and *scalped* but still breathing... A Sabre thrust was given him in mercy... Soon shouts and curses, cries of women and children reached our ears... a horrid sight was before us. The cave was full of our volunteers yelling like fiends, while on the rocky floor lay over twenty Mexicans, dead and dying in pools of blood. Women and children were ...shrieking for mercy'.

Sam and his fellow dragoons put a stop to the murderous riot:

'Soon a brutal looking Rackensacker [Arkansan] advanced towards us brandishing a huge knife dripping with gore in one hand, and bunch of scalps in the other, and cried out: 'H'yer, you Regulars! I'm Bill Stamps, I'm! We don't a muss with you, we don't! I raised this 'ere *har* from the damned yellow bellies that had on poor Archy's clothes. I did! Take me to 'Old Fussy' [General Wool] and I'll be responsible for the whole.' <sup>(15)</sup>

After the miscreants were herded away Sam and the other dragoons were sent back to the cave with army surgeons to aid the injured: 'Most of the butchered Mexicans had been scalped; only three men were found unharmed. A rough crucifix was fastened to a rock, and some irreverent wretch had crowned the image with a bloody scalp...'

An official inquiry white-washed the affair, but in April 1847 Gen. Zachary Taylor ordered the Arkansas cavalry back to the Rio Grande as punishment <sup>(16)</sup>. In the meantime, the 'Rackensackers' were instrumental in repulsing the

Mexican cavalry that rolled up the American left at Buena Vista (23 February 1847), and in this action Col. Yell was killed. Despite their loathing for discipline, the volunteers almost always proved themselves in battle.

#### VOLUNTEER UNIFORMS

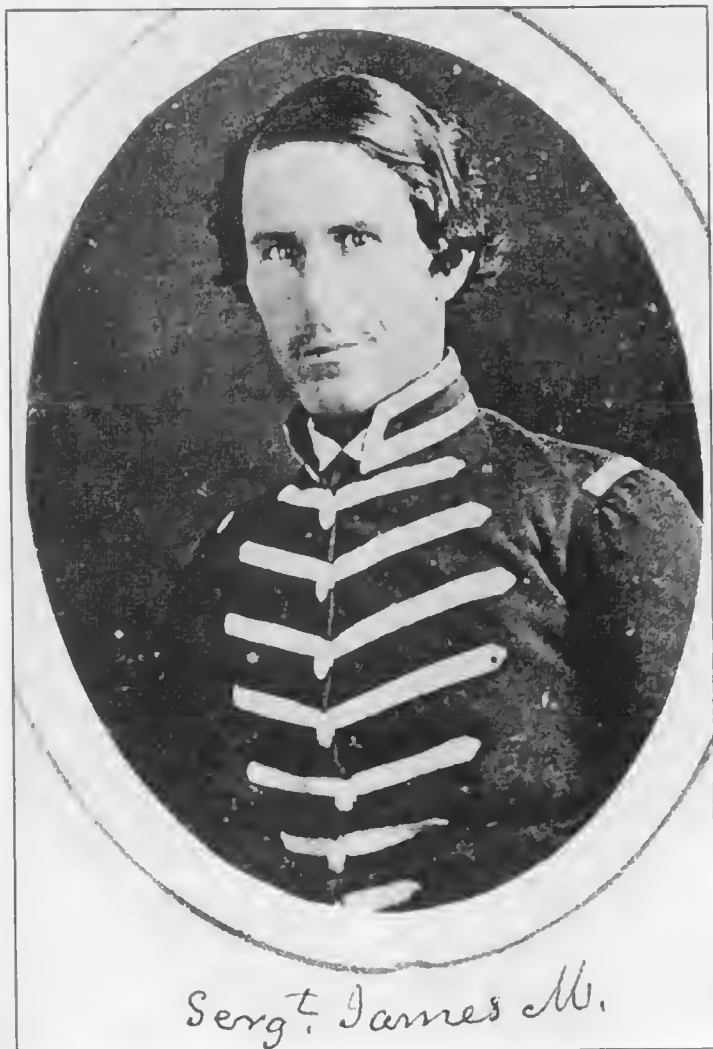
At the war's outbreak the federal clothing establishment at Shuylkill Arsenal (Philadelphia) was wholly inadequate to the task of clothing both regulars and volunteers. Therefore, President Polk and Congress authorized the volunteers to supply their own initial needs, with each soldier being credited \$21.00 commutation for his first six months service. Later in the war volunteers drew federal clothing.

Authorities in some states, such as Virginia, used the commutation money to let large contracts so their men would be well-clothed and would achieve a uniform appearance. Authorities in other states, such as Missouri, apparently let the troops have the money to spend as they saw fit, with the result that their men went off to war in whatever suited their fancy or, worse yet, having squandered the money, in the clothes on their backs. In some states, such as Illinois and Indiana, each company was allowed to get up its own uniform. The result of these varying policies was an amazing array of cut, cloth, and colour among the volunteers, at least in the early stages.

There has yet to be a comprehensive survey of the clothing procured and worn by American volunteers in the Mexican War, and such a survey is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, the reader will be offered here simply an illustrated sampler of state clothing, drawn randomly from both primary and secondary sources.

#### The Virginia Regiment

The State of Virginia had venerable aristocratic and military traditions stretching back before the Revolution, and as would consequently be expected, took steps to attire its



Sergeant Jacques M. Lasselle, Co. G, 1st Indiana Volunteers. His uniform is discussed in the text. (Courtesy Cass County Historical Society)



volunteer regiment in uniform and high-quality clothing. The commutation allowance from federal authorities was diverted to the state treasury. Agents were sent to Philadelphia to purchase goods from the contractors who supplied Shuylkill Arsenal; and contracts were let for uniforms consisting of a dark blue cap, dark blue shell jacket and trousers, two pairs of socks, two flannel shirts, two cotton shirts, one sky-blue overcoat, one leather stock, and one grey blanket. An itemized estimate of costs showed that the whole could be purchased for \$16.95t per soldier, well under the six-month commutation allowance of \$21.00; but Maj. Early noted on 15 January 1847, 'The Commutation for clothing for Six months, is not Sufficient to Clothe the men'<sup>(16)</sup>.

The bill of costs and the contract documents cited above, and the surviving daguerreotype of Private William Hall, Co. B, Virginia Regiment, offer considerable insight into the Virginia uniform. The cap was similar to, but shaped differently from, the US regulation cap. The cloth for it and for the jacket and trousers was to be 'of the quality used for the dragoon jackets in the army', though that actually acquired was judged 'lighter than the dragoon jacket, but next in quality to it'. (Dragoon cloth, as seen on surviving specimen jackets in the Smithsonian Institution, was a high-quality, knapped and grained broadcloth.) The jackets were fully lined, cotton in the sleeves and black cambric in the body. The body was to be wadded. Twenty buttons, two hooks and eyes (for the collar), one and one half yards of worsted lace (colour not specified), and various other notions were apportioned for each jacket. The trousers had interior trim of black cambric, and six large and six small buttons were allowed, presumably for suspenders and fly closure respectively. One buckle was apportioned, no doubt for a small belted closure at the back of the waist.

Private Hall wears clothing

*Jacques's brother Captain Stanislaus Lasselle, Co. G, 1st Indiana Volunteers: again, see commentary in body text. (Courtesy Cass County Historical Society)*

roughly corresponding to this description, though some discrepancies are apparent. Nine buttons (which under magnification appear to bear the Virginia state seal of Liberty vanquishing a tyrant and the legend 'Sic Semper Tyrannis') are visible down the front, and four at the visible cuff. Assuming four on the other cuff, we can account for seventeen of the authorized 20 buttons. Where are the other three? The collar, which is not clearly shown in Hall's image, is a likely place, but three? Four, for a total of 21, would be explicable, two on each side of the collar as in US regulation jackets. The yard and a half of worsted lace authorized for the coat would be enough to outline the collar and, possibly, provide one loop on each side. Perhaps one button went on each side of the collar, and an extra was provided as a replacement. Then, too, Hall's clothing may not represent the official Virginia uniform. His vest, which is clearly of a military cut, must surely be an item of private purchase, for no record of vests exists in the official papers. And a company commander (E.C. Carrington, not Hall's company commander) noted that 'the men, many of them, prefer getting articles for themselves...'

The overcoats of the Virginians, we can assume by their colour being identical to US regulation sky-blue, must have been very similar to US issue. Correspondence regarding the cotton shirts specifies 'an excellent twilled goods, with indigo stripe, which sounds like the 'hickory shirts' worn by regular Lieutenant Dana and cited in Part 2 of this series.

Despite the efforts of the Virginia authorities to make the best use of the commutation money, it is evident that it did not suffice. Jubal Early said so in January 1847; and in following April, when the unit was in Mexico, Col. Hamtramck requested clothing or commutation from the



US Secretary of War. In May the Virginia adjutant general informed Hamtramck that the state legislature had failed to take steps to relieve the men's wants, and offered this limp consolation: 'If the War continues however, I trust you will have better fortune...'. In June, with the unit's first six months in service up and the period covered by commutation expired, the Virginians began drawing federal clothing. Lt. Kenney of Co. C wrote from Buena Vista to Hamtramck in Monterrey on 10 June 1847: 'Most of our companies here are drawing their new clothing, and some of them... would scarcely be recognized...'<sup>(17)</sup>.

The photograph of, apparently, the Virginia Regiment, taken in a street in Saltillo, and shown in Part 1 of this series, can probably now be said to show the unit in its federal issue clothing. When the regiment was repatriated at the end of its service in the summer of 1848, visitors to its last encampment found the men

in worn and tattered clothing, their skin darkened by the Mexican sun. Many wore beards. A Petersburg reporter noted they were 'anything but parlor looking, and their appearance clearly showed that, though they had never been in a battle, they had experienced pretty rough service'<sup>(18)</sup>.

#### Jeff Davis's Mississippi Rifles

Another unit that made economical use of commutation money was Jefferson Davis's regiment of Mississippi Rifles. This corps gave its name to the M1848 rifle, for its effective use of the weapon at Buena Vista. Sam Chamberlain witnessed them going into action there, and provided the most complete description of them:

'This gallant regiment passed by us with the light swinging step peculiar to Indians and hunters, their uniform a red shirt worn outside of their white duck pants, and black slouch hats, armed with Windsor [the M1841] Rifles,



A



B







(A) and front cover: Reconstruction of a rifleman of Jefferson Davis's Mississippi Regiment, as described by dragoon Sam Chamberlain wearing "...red shirts ... outside of their white duck pants". Hats may have varied between straws and wide-brimmed black slouches. He carries the US M1841 rifle, which became better known as the 'Mississippi rifle' because of the fame won by this unit fighting with it at Buena Vista. The bullet pouch and flask are US M1839 pattern; the haversack and canteen are federal issue types. (Clothing reconstructed by County Cloth of Pains, Ohio)

(B) Reconstruction of a rifleman of the District of Columbia and Maryland Volunteers: one company joined the regiment in December 1847 from Washington, described by their major as 'handsomely dressed in dark blue jackets and pants'. Collar trim is conjectural; rifle and equipment are identical to (A). (Clothing reconstructed by County Cloth)

(C) Reconstruction of an Illinois Volunteer, as described by a member of the unit: "... short jackets ... usually blue or gray with red or yellow facings". The style of the latter are European, due to the presumed influence of the many European immigrants in volunteer regiments. The 'glazed' cap of waterproof material is often described for the 'Suckers'. The weapon is the 1816 flintlock musket, the accoutrements M1839. In 1841 the bayonet frog was changed, moving to the waist belt, and the right shoulder belt was dispensed with; it is included here on the premise that many volunteers may have received outmoded ordnance supplies.

(D) Detail of typical pants, shirt, suspenders, and fancy lining of jacket, the latter copied from surviving examples.





Rear view of the reconstructed soldier of Illinois Volunteers — see colour photograph (C).

and eighteen-inch Bowie Knives<sup>(19)</sup>.

On the matter of hats there is some uncertainty. While Chamberlain specified black slouches, a Mississippi soldier's letter describing the aftermath of the battle said of a dead comrade, 'But for the straw hat... I should have failed to recognize the body of young Eggleston'<sup>(20)</sup>. It is possible that the Mississippians' hat were items of personal choice.

### Illinois Volunteers

Though Illinois was apportioned three regiments, its Democratic citizens were so struck by war fever that four regiments coalesced in the summer of 1846. Illinois seems to have gone about uniforming its troops less methodically than did Virginia. Governor Thomas Ford announced to the volunteers that they should fit themselves out in a 'blue jeans or cassinet jacket or roundabout, standing collar and

brass buttons, and blue jeans or cassinet pantaloons and glazed caps.' He also noted that, as the US government would pay for the clothing, 'any person who will furnish the uniform for the companies... will be secured by a lien on the pay rolls of the companies'. The result seems to have been that companies selected their own styles, then procured their clothing from different sources — in the case of the 1st Regiment, from a 'Patriotic Sewing Society' made up of the ladies of Jacksonville. The consequence of Illinois's approach was a conglomeration of uniform styles, of various shades of blue, or even grey, and differing coloured facings<sup>(21)</sup>.

One of our accompanying colour reconstructions shows an Illinois volunteer drawn from Alexander Konze's description: 'The uniforms, which differ with every company, consist of short jackets or coats, usually blue or gray with red or yellow facings. The cloth is light summergoods, rarely broadcloth'<sup>(22)</sup>. The

model wears a 'glazed cap' and US M1839 accoutrements with the pre-1841 variation of bayonet suspended on a shoulder sling.

Sam Chamberlain, when a sergeant in Co. A, 2nd Illinois, said of his company's uniforms: 'We were uniformed as each company selected and strange grotesque costumes now filled the Camp.' His company 'made choice of jacket and pants of mixed Kentucky jeans, with yellow stripes across the breast like a Dragoon Bugler'. He continued, 'By permission, I had mine made with dark blue cloth, with only my Sergeant's chevrons, and it was quite a neat affair'. A coloured drawing which Sam made of himself and men shows him in plain dark blue and the men in light blue with yellow stripes'<sup>(23)</sup>.

### Indiana Volunteers

Indiana's adjutant general authorized that state's companies to adopt whatever uniforms they desired. He recommended the following: cap, double-breasted frock coat, and pants of a 'gray mixed or sky blue jeans'. One company (E, 3rd Indiana) was described as purchasing 'uniforms of bright blue jeans'. A letter writer of Co. G, 1st Indiana reported: 'We are to have blue cloth tight bodied coats trimmed with silver lace and three rows buttons on the breast — pants of blue satinnet, also trimmed with silver lace — no vest — caps of cloth with glazed leather tops...'. The accompanying photographs of Sgt. Jacques M. Lasselle of that same unit shows one row of buttons and blind lacing that could, but apparently does not, accommodate two more rows of buttons. The collar is edged, and there is a single piece of edging on the shoulder. The photograph of his brother, Captain Stanislaus Lasselle shows either a frock coat or a jacket with just the collar edged. In all, it would appear that Indiana, like its neighbour state Illinois, let each company decide on its own uniform<sup>(24)</sup>.

**To be concluded: Part 6 of this series will describe and illustrate**

**further examples of volunteer uniforms.** **MI**

### Notes

- (1) Lee A. Wallace, Jr., 'The First Regiment of Virginia Volunteers, 1846-1848', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 77:1 (1969), p.54.
- (2) See for example General Order No.1 (Cincinnati, Ohio, 19 June 1847), in 'Ohio, Clothing, Cash, Etc., Co. G, & Order, Cos. A, B, D, 4th Inf. (Mex. War)', n.p., Record Group 92, US National Archives.
- (3) Samuel E. Chamberlain, *My Confession* (manuscript ca.1855, published with introduction and postscript by Roger Butterfield, New York, 1956), p.31.
- (4) Alexander Konze, quoted in George Winston Smith and Charles Judah, eds., *Chronicles of the Gringos* (Albuquerque, 1968), p.35.
- (5) Army slang for an Illinois volunteer.
- (6) Chamberlain, p.55.
- (7) Albert Lombard, quoted in Smith and Judah, p.20.
- (8) Konze, quoted in Smith and Judah, p.36.
- (9) '4 Regt. Ohio Infantry Descriptive Book (Mex. War)', Record Group 92, US National Archives.
- (10) John R. Kenly, *Memoirs of a Maryland Volunteer* (Philadelphia, 1873), pp.47-48.
- (11) Chamberlain, pp.32-34.
- (12) Virginia Regiment Letterbook, 1st Infantry, Mex. War (1846-47), Record Group 92, US National Archives, n.p.
- (13) Wallace, pp.65-70.
- (14) Chamberlain, pp.89-90.
- (15) Chamberlain, pp.86-88.
- (16) Report of the Virginia Adjutant General, 30 December 1846. Printed in the *Journal of the [Virginia] House of Delegates* (Document No. 16), pp. 1-9. A/C No. 5908, Sundries, Virginia Volunteer Regiment (Selected Items), Mexican War, Record Group 217, US National Archives. Virginia Regiment Letterbook, op. cit.
- (17) Virginia Regiment Letterbook.
- (18) Wallace, p.77.
- (19) Chamberlain, pp. 122-123.
- (20) *Vicksburg [Mississippi] Whig*, 28 April 1847, also quoted in Smith and Judah, p.104. I am indebted to John F. Graf for pointing this description out to me.
- (21) John F. Graf, 'Our Grand Regimental Flourish: The Uniforms and Equipment of the Fourth Regiment of Illinois Volunteers, 1846-47', *Military Collector and Historian*, 41:1 (Spring 1989), pp.22-27, also personal communication with Mr. Graf.
- (22) Quoted in Smith and Judah, p.35.
- (23) Chamberlain, pp.32-33.
- (24) 11. Charles McBarron, Jr., et al., 'Indiana Volunteers in the Mexican War, 1846-1847', *Military Collector and Historian*, 23:3 (Fall 1971), pp.83-84; also published in John R. Elting, ed., *Years of Growth, 1796-1851* (vol. 2 of *Military Uniforms in America*, 3 vols.; published by the Company of Military Historians, San Rafael, 1977), pp. 132-133.



# 'The Witch with Ropes for Hair'

PETER VEMMING HANSEN

In 'MI' No. 27 Dr. Hansen described the fascinating reconstruction of a working medieval trebuchet siege-engine by the Falsters Minder Museum at Nykøbing, southern Denmark. In this article he updates the story, with an account including more recent work on a perrier — the ancient man-powered machine described by the Arabs as 'the witch from whose head the ropes hang like hair' — and a man-gonel.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first mention of leverage artillery in Denmark can be dated to 1134. The Saxos Chronicle tells us that Erik Emmune used a trebuchet when besieging Haraldsborg, north of Roskilde. The Danes were still unskilled in the use of such weapons at that date, and the engine was built and operated by Germans living in the Roskilde area. It is possible, however, that Scandinavians had some experience of these devices much earlier: the monk Abbo de St. Germain, in his epic *De Bello Parisiaco* dated to c.890, gives an eye-witness account of such a weapon being used by the Vikings in their siege of Paris.

When and how leverage artillery first entered the history of medieval European warfare is unknown; but there is

some evidence that these devices, whose origins are of great antiquity, came to Europe by way of the Orient. Generally speaking, such engines may be divided into two categories: those operated by man-power, and those using counterweights. The former are believed to be the older. It is difficult to propose a detailed taxonomy, since there were so many variations on the single basic principle, and even weapons which combined the two methods of propulsion — man-power and counterweights.

From the turn of the present century and up until the 1930s German scholars took the view that leverage artillery was an 'accidental' Norman invention, dating to around the 10th century, which later spread to the Mediterranean and Asia. But subsequent study of



13th century Italian miniature showing perriers in use by both sides in a siege: a light machine on the tower, and a semi-man-powered, semi-counterweight machine of massive construction outside the walls. This latter 'hybrid' was the form chosen for the Nykøbing reconstruction.

to Sicily and Italy in the 9th century. Here the western Europeans rapidly evolved the heavy counterweight version, 'the Frankish trebuchet'; and knowledge of this improved machine spread back eastwards in the ensuing centuries.

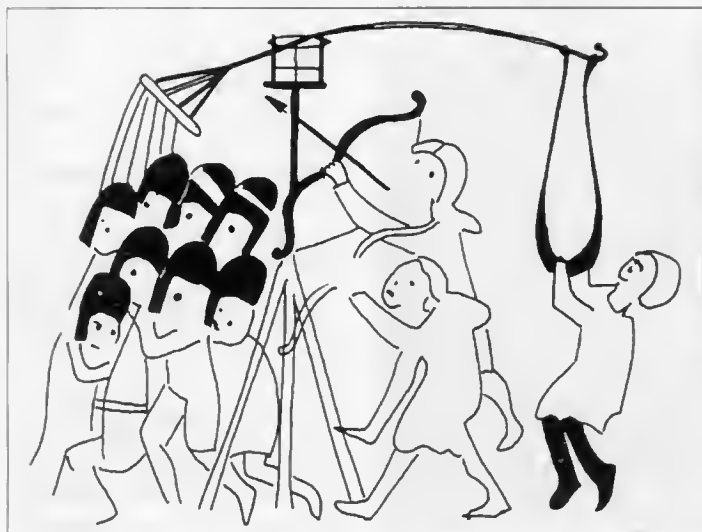
Leverage propulsion artillery is thought to have remained in use in Europe as late as the first half of the 16th century, but fell out of service with the increasing efficiency of high trajectory mortars. In 1575 it was still possible to find scholars and soldiers disputing the relative merits of gunpowder artillery and the trebuchet; and as late as 1779 an English general employed improvised engines of the ancient type to bombard inaccessible targets at Gibraltar.

## MAN-POWERED MACHINES

There seem to have been two types of man-powered devices; these are not described in any detail in the sources, but can be seen in medieval illustrations.

Byzantine, Islamic, Indian and Chinese sources, particularly by Scandinavian scholars, established that leverage artillery was in use in Asia before it reached Europe. The principle probably originated in China, whence it spread westwards in the 6th century, reaching the Arabs via Persia and Byzantium. The Japanese encountered such engines in their Korean war of 618. The man-powered devices were given highly picturesque names in the Arab sources: 'mother of hairs', 'the long-haired one', and 'the witch from whose head the ropes hang like hair'.

It seems possible to follow these engines from Byzantium



**Left:**  
A man-powered perrier depicted in a manuscript by Petrus de Ebulo (c.1187-1200).

**Above:**  
Before building the siege-engine the museum reconstructed a medieval treadmill crane to haul the heavy timbers used in the project. (Museum Falsters Minder)



The first type of light, flexible construction, with a 'springy' throwing arm imparting a whipping impulse to the projectile. Shown in more or less similar forms in European, Mediterranean and Oriental illustrations, their methods of use is clear from Byzantine and Western sources. One can see a man standing and restraining the sling holding the projectile, attached to the long end of the throwing arm, while the rest of the crew pull hard on a number of ropes attached to the short end. The sling is released when sufficient tension has been achieved in the pivoted, flexible arm.

Another type of engine is illustrated in the 13th century *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*: a much stiffer and heavier design, monumental and rigid, resembling a trebuchet except that part of the motive power is human traction. Perhaps this may be seen as a transition between the light man-powered and the later heavy trebuchet machines. This Italian minia-



*The crew prepare to put tension on the ropes attached to the solid oak counterweight of the reconstructed perrier. (Anders Knudsen)*

*The perrier is released and its sling swings up and back; it will slip off the iron finger on the tip of the arm when the latter is just short of vertical; cf. photo of trebuchet release, 'MI' No. 27 p.16. (Anders Knudsen)*

ture is interesting for a number of reasons: partly because of its appearance of authenticity, and partly in showing two types of man-powered engines in the same scene. On top of a tower we see a light machine, which clearly has its roots back in the days of the original Oriental designs; on the ground is a heavier type of more European nature, with features adopted from the popular contemporary trebuchet.

## RECONSTRUCTION ATTEMPTS

The projectile-throwing machines of ancient and medieval times have long aroused interest, and reconstructions have been made of, particularly, the torsion artillery of Graeco-Roman times. A pioneer in this field, and indeed in experimental archaeology as a whole, was the German officer Gen. E. Schramm, who at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries reconstructed and tested a whole series of ancient torsion devices.

Another pioneer in the field was the Emperor Napoleon III, who had Capt. Favé reconstruct a full-size trebuchet; this followed the medieval writer Marinus Sanutus' dimensions. The reconstruction had a 10.3m arm; the ballast weighed 4500kg, of which 3000kg was in the ballast box and 1500kg lashed to the arm itself. Napoleon himself had designed the sling, and specified the curve and mounting of the iron tip which held it at the end of the arm.

The results of the trials with this machine were as follows:

- (1) 24lb cannonball...175m
- (2) Sand-filled shell, 22cm diameter...145m
- (3) Sand-filled shell, 27cm diameter...120m
- (4) Sand-filled shell, 32cm diameter...120m.

At this stage the trials were abandoned, as the supporting structure of the machine collapsed. Unfortunately no plans of Napoleon's machine survive, but the results are nevertheless interesting, particularly when compared with those obtained with the Falsters Minder trebuchet described in 'MI' No. 27: the latter achieved





a range of 168m with half as much ballast and a heavier projectile. Napoleon's machine must therefore have been wrongly proportioned in some essential aspects.

Recently four reconstructions of leverage artillery have been made to full size. A trebuchet was built at Chateau Castenau, France, which to judge from photographs was based closely on a 1903 reconstruction design by Payne-Gallwey; so far as is known this machine has not been published. A second experiment was carried out by officers of the Tower of London as part of an educational project; they constructed replicas of one- and two-armed torsion machines, and a trebuchet. The latter seems to have functioned satisfactorily, though the reconstruction would appear to this writer to have been hastily made without the fullest attention to medieval sources and later research.

The company 'Mists of Time', under the direction of David Lazenby, have built reconstructions of a man-powered perrier and a trebuchet, with replicas of a catapult and a mangonel, for display in a Welsh castle. A small scale reconstruction of a perrier was recently undertaken at the University of Toronto, Canada. Both these efforts are too recent for any details or trial results to be available.

In addition to these full-size replicas, many attempts have been made to answer essential questions by building models based on calculations and drawing-board reconstructions. The most famous are Viollet-le-Duc's drawings of 1854; but Dufour (1840), Payne-Gallwey (1903) and Rathgen (1928) also tried to reconstruct trebuchets in drawings and models. The most intensive work on the reconstruction and trial of trebuchets in miniature was done by D. J. Cathcart King; unfortunately details of only a few of his 70 or so models have been

published, but his work gave him a deep practical insight into the workings of these old war engines. Cathcart King died only recently, and in view of his important work it is to be hoped that his models and notes are preserved and cared for by some museum for the benefit of future scholars in this field.

### PERRIER RECONSTRUCTION

Due to a considerable donation from Danish cultural foundations, it became possible last year for the Museum of Falsters Minder to build a full-size reconstruction of a perrier. In order to achieve authenticity many preparations were necessary.

First we had to build a medieval crane, powered by a treadmill, to handle the heavy timbers. Then we reconstructed a medieval smithy to make all the ironwork. Charcoal for the forge had to be prepared by slow burning in the traditional stack; and in order to preserve the timbers, we had to make tar. Since the crafts of tar-making and charcoal-burning no longer survive in Denmark, farmers from a small town in Sweden, who retained the old skills, visited the museum for a week and produced enough for our needs. From this point it was only a short step to establishing a proper 'medieval technology centre', both to research subjects relevant to the reconstruction of the siege engines, and to preserve and demonstrate the old skills. The centre opened on 4 August 1991, and in two months attracted 20,000 visitors.



*The mangonel was reconstructed from massive oak timbers; these proved by no means too strong in practice, when the machine lived up to its Roman name. (Museum Falsters Minder)*



*Stringing the mangonel, using 150 metres of flax rope. It is intended to replace this with the correct hair rope when sufficient can be obtained. (Museum Falsters Minder)*

During this period two siege-engines were reconstructed: a perrier and a mangonel. The perrier was built as closely as possible to the pattern suggested by the 13th century Italian miniature mentioned above. In principle these machines are simple, since they do not incorporate very heavy counterweights. The axle of the throwing arm must be placed high, so as to allow the crew a 'pulling distance' sufficient to accelerate the short end of the arm, and to allow the arm end to swing free between the two supporting 'towers' without hitting the crew clustered beneath.

The perrier built at the centre is what may be termed a hybrid, a form between the light Oriental man-powered machines and the heavy trebuchet. It was constructed of pine, with an oak counterweight. The axle is 4.3m above ground level. The throwing arm is 6m long between tip and axle, and 1.7m between axle and counterweight attachment. To draw down and hold the short end of the arm

requires approximately 80kg of pull. The machine has not yet been tested to any great extent, but two major points emerge already. Due to the fact that it is 'hand operated', the perrier is naturally less accurate than the trebuchet: some 20 men all pulling on ropes will never be able to achieve exact consistency of power and timing. Secondly, the perrier can be loaded and discharged more rapidly than the trebuchet.

### MANGONEL RECONSTRUCTION

The mangonel torsion engine is a highly developed device, whose use by the Romans is well documented (see e.g. 'MI' No. 4 p.30 *et seq* for discussion by Dr. Paul Holder of Schramm's and Payne-Gallwey's work on the Roman *onager* mangonel, illustrated in part by Angus McBride). We know very little about the construction details of medieval mangonels, but the Roman sources are fairly rich.

When the medieval centre at Nykobing built a reconstruction the primary interest lay in the principle of the torsion spring, and how it could perform with the great force described in the sources — *onager* means wild ass, and the Romans claimed that when discharged it kicked like a mule. At the Saalburg museum, near Bad Homburg in Germany, General Schramm reconstructed a Roman *onager*



in the turn of this century. He noted that he was unable to build a throwing arm strong enough to withstand the force of a fully-stringed machine; every time he discharged it the arm simply shattered, to the peril of onlookers. He reduced the number of torsion ropes; and in spite of this, achieved ranges of around 350m with a 5lb projectile.

The Roman sources mention that the torsion ropes should be made of hair; women's hair was the best, but horse hair was also serviceable. Hair ropes are extremely flexi-

ble, but very sensitive to damp; so torsion machines need to be kept in a dry environment to work at maximum efficiency.

The Nykobing reconstruction is built of very heavy oak timbers and has a throwing arm made from a yew branch, 2.7m long. The main frame is 3.4m long, 1.3m wide (inside measurement) and 2.2m high. Total weight is approximately 1800kg (1.77 tons). The first attempts to string the machine were made with 150m of conventional flax rope.

At the first test, without tightening the spring very

much, the projectile travelled 180m — and the oak frame started to break in two places... The trials had to be postponed while extra support was built into the ground frame. So far the greatest range achieved is around 180m, but we expect that when we obtain hair ropes and restring the mangonel we will be able to reach much further.

#### Future reconstructions

The Nykobing medieval centre plans two further reconstructions during the 1992 season. First we would like to look more closely at the two-

armed torsion machines; and then to build a very large trebuchet, with a counterweight of up to 10 tons, and with two treadmills to pull down the arm.

The more we know about medieval artillery and its efficiency, the better we can understand medieval fortification and tactics, crafts and early technology. By undertaking this work in the environment of the medieval centre, with its reconstructions and 'living history' exhibitions, we also inform and intrigue the general public.

#### Further reading

D.J. Cathcart King, *The Trebuchet and other Siege Engines*; Chateau Gaillard IX-X, 1982

R. Payne-Gallwey, *The Crossbow*; London, 1903

A.B. Hoffmeyer, *Military Equipment in the Byzantine Manuscript of Skylitzes in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid*; Gladius 5, Granada, 1966

Peter Vemming Hansen, *Experimental Reconstruction of a Medieval Trebuchet*; Acta Archaeologica, Copenhagen (in press 1992)

**MI**



Winding down the throwing arm of the fully rigged mangonel, by crow-bars in the pierced ends of the rear revolving beam on which is wound a rope stop. (Museum Falsters Minder)



Discharging the mangonel. It achieved an immediate range of nearly 200 yards, and promptly began to shake itself to pieces... we recall that Schramm's early 20th century experiments were complicated by the throwing arm shattering with the force of the discharge. The 'pillow' against which the arm impacts on the stop beam is made of hessian, so that on impact the air can be forced out between the fibres. Earlier experiments prove that a leather pad, which retains the trapped air, simply explodes under the force of the impact. (Anders Knudsen)

# Trebuchet Reconstructions in Czechoslovakia

LEONID KRIZEK

By coincidence, on almost the same day that we received Dr. Hansen's article, we also heard from a Czechoslovakian military history journalist about some experiments carried out in the same field since the mid-1980s. 'MI' readers may be interested to learn of this remarkable effort, given the inherent difficulties faced by enthusiasts behind the Iron Curtain — which was still in place when this project began.

Friday, 15 August 1986: a Czech TV cameraman, just arrived on the scene of tests of a replica medieval siege-engine, asks the man in charge, Radim Zepletal, where he should set up his camera crew to capture the projectile hitting the target. Exhausted after several days' hard work assembling the machine, Radim answers jokingly that the best place is the spot where a stick marks the day's longest throw. The TV crew obediently set up their paraphernalia close to the marker. The trebuchet whips through its arc; the projectile smashes to earth, knocking the marker stick flying. The TV crew — the only people present not struck dumb and paralyzed by this sharp-shooting — pack their kit and leave, satisfied with an easy half-hour's work which they can put on the air that same evening. Radim is puzzled — shocked, even. The machine was set up completely differently from the previous throw. A ballistic enigma is born.

## THE HELFSTYN PROJECT

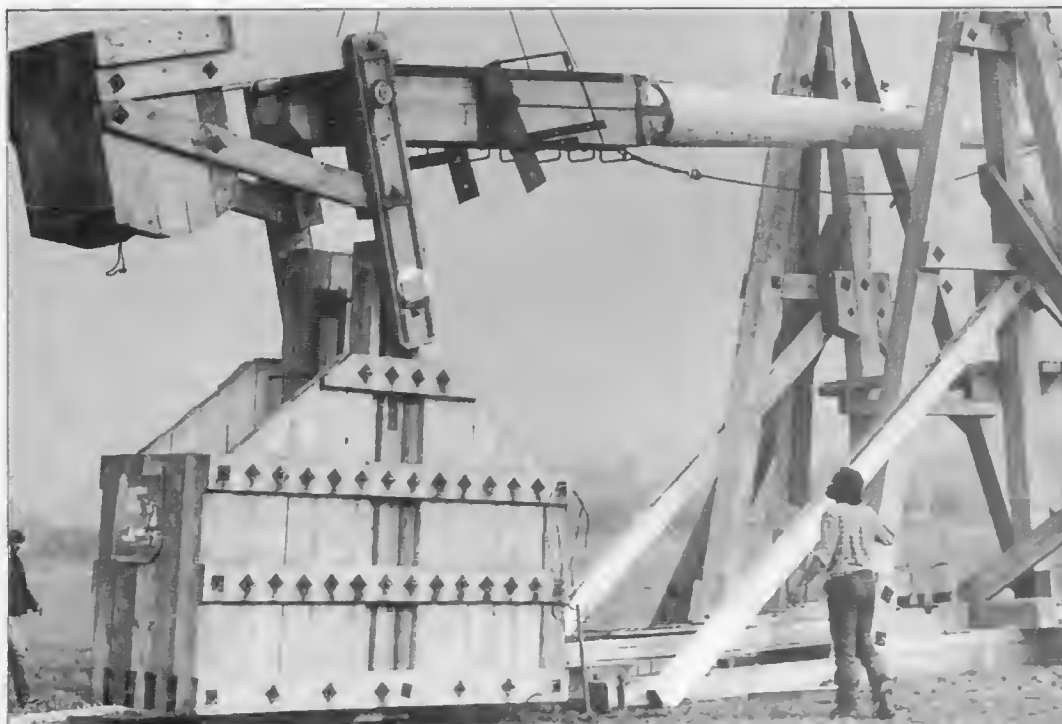
In summer 1985 Radim, founder and leader of a Moravian group practising historical sword fighting, proposed the establishment of an open-air museum of medieval war machines at Helfstyn Castle, the largest medieval ruin in Czechoslovakia. Members of Radim's group, 'Markus-M', live in nearby Prerov, and Helfstyn is the setting for one of their annual

performances. (Classical fencing is extremely popular in this country; there are more than 160 active clubs, and contacts between these and other, uniformed historical groups and their counterparts in the UK, USA and Canada are growing.) Helfstyn would be the ideal site; and Radim Zepletal never talks idly. Weeks of hard work begin.

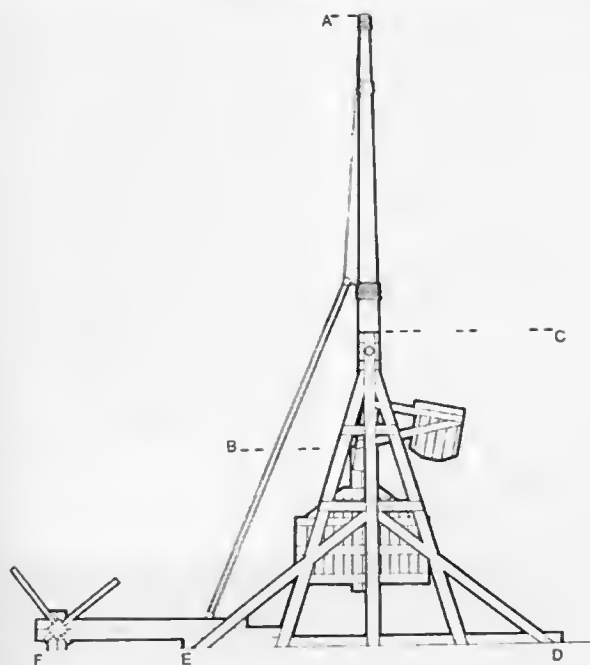
Throwing engines — catapults, slings, trebuchets — are the longest-lived artillery in history. Invented by unknown engineers in the mists of antiquity, they are mentioned in the Bible. After their widespread use in Graeco-Roman times they entered a period of obliv-

ion in Europe, but re-emerged at the time of the Crusades. Though Leonardo da Vinci referred to them as no longer being in common use, Mahomet II used them against the defenders of Rhodes in 1480; it is known that a trebuchet was kept in the Emperor Maximilian's arsenal in 1510; and it is reported that the Saxon Duke Albrecht was killed by a stone thrown by a trebuchet at the siege of Rieklingen castle as late as 1585.

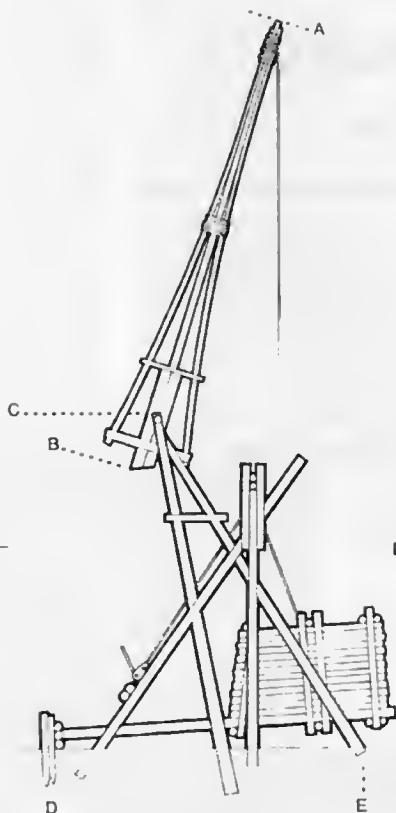
*The first trebuchet replica, tested in August 1986 on an airfield near Prerov. (Libuse Zapletalova)*



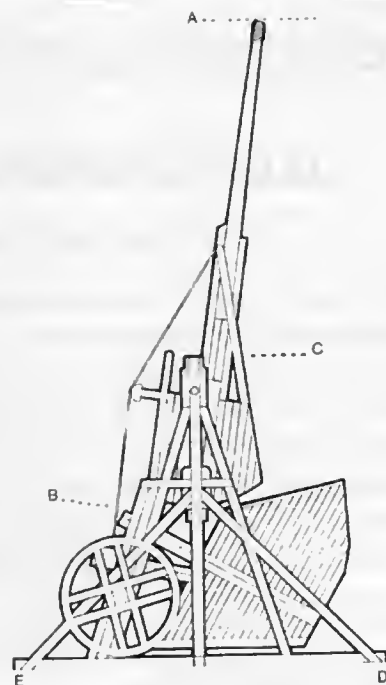




The 1986 Helfstyn replica, the first in the series. The throwing arm (A-B) is 11.5m/37.7 ft; the height of the side 'towers' above the main frame (C-D), 8.25m/27 ft; the length of the main frame (D-F), 14.5m/47.5 ft; the width of the frame, 8m/26.2 ft; and (E-F), 4.5m/14.75 ft. The counterweight can take up to 10 tons of ballast. (All drawings, Radim Zepletal)



The second trebuchet, now at Krasna Horka. (A-B), 13m/42.6 ft; (C-D), 8m/26.2 ft; (D-E), 10m/32.8 ft; width of frame, 8m/26.2 ft; and (A-D), 17m/55.75 ft.



The third trebuchet, Hradec nad Moravici. (A-B), 11.5m/37.7 ft; (C-D), 8m/26.2 ft; (D-E), 8m/26.2 ft.

The first replica built in Czechoslovakia was based — like that ordered by Napoleon III — on the reconstruction drawings by Viollet-le-Duc, who used the French 13th century engineer Villard de Honnecourt as a source. It was tested in 1986 at a Moravian airfield. The projectiles differed in weight, up to 300kg concrete balls. With a 6000kg counterweight a 100kg ball was thrown to a range of 200 metres. The double counterweight was not used at that time, as the machine had to be moved to Helfstyn, where it was not possible to continue the trials. This replica now stands at Helfstyn on a base 8m x 16m; it is 17m high; and its construction used 20 cubic metres of timber.

The builder believes that with full use of its capacity the range would be around 350 metres. There is little verifiable medieval data on exact

weights, measurements and performances; and on those grounds Radim's attempt to enter his trebuchet's results in *The Guinness Book of Records* was politely but firmly refused: '...Unfortunately we have no published record nor do we have any information on our files with which to compare this device, so we cannot make any comment on it in record terms....'

#### Further replicas

In July 1988 the Helfstyn Castle replica, which had intrigued many visitors, caught the attention of the custodian of a Slovak castle. Radim agreed to build another trebuchet; and this now stands, as a working exhibit, at Krasna Horka. Here the terrain, and a nearby village, prevented long range tests; but this model fully vindicated Radim's technical improvements, and showed that the long ranges claimed in the old chronicles

are credible. Given these encouraging results it was not surprising that Radim began, in summer 1990, construction of a third trebuchet, this time at the Moravian town of Hradec nad Moravici.

These second and third models are not replicas of known historical originals. They are original constructions designed and built by Radim Zepletal on classic mechanical principles and from typical materials, and the third version was built solely for test purposes. A lighter development of the first two, it is capable of throwing stones of 8kg-12kg weight; and with a counterweight of 4000kg, the extraordinary range of 445m was achieved.

This third type could be strengthened, and with increased counterweight and heavier projectiles it should be possible to achieve performances of well over 500 metres. All who have partici-

pated in the tests of the three trebuchets believe that their next attempt to break into *The Guinness Book of Records* will be successful.

And in the summer of 1990 Radim had a new idea.... The hulk of a fishing cutter has been bought in Poland, and is now undergoing 'complete reconstruction' at Prerov. Radim and his friends — among whom I am proud to count myself — intend to reconstruct a replica of a medieval ship, and to participate in the World Expo 1992 events, and in commemorations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the New World. For this purpose a new agency has been founded — Kolumbus 92 — which since its foundation has also been responsible for the continuing trebuchet experiments. Radim and his crew look forward to the future with excited expectation. **MI**

# The Unknown War: Portuguese Paratroops in Africa, 1961-74 (I)

DAVID E. SPENCER & MIGUEL MACHADO  
Paintings by PAUL HANNON

Although their campaigns were not widely reported in the world at large, the combined Portuguese armed forces spent 14 years fighting three wars in their African territories. Among the units that most distinguished themselves were the Portuguese Air Force paratroopers. The paras were among the first, in 1961, to confront the pro-independence insurgents; and were also among the last to leave when Portugal decided to abandon the African territories after the 1974 revolution in metropolitan Portugal.

While other European powers including France, Belgium, and Great Britain withdrew from and granted independence to their colonies in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Portugal stubbornly hung on to her enclaves. Inevitably, the turmoil of independence in surrounding African states reached Portugal's colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guiné-Bissau. In 1961 hostilities were initiated by a massive uprising in Angola. Two years later warfare broke out in Guiné-Bissau, and a year after that hostilities were initiated in Mozambique. In all, the wars would last 14 years — twice as long as US combat troops remained in Vietnam (1965-1972) — with fighting on three different fronts, and numbers of soldiers committed to the war, in proportion to the Portuguese population, exceeding US troop levels in Vietnam.

The Portuguese did not enjoy the material support of modern weaponry of the United States. Portugal had only a small indigenous arms industry, and despite membership of NATO, disagreement over her African policy brought a subsequent arms embargo by the major NATO arms producers, especially the United States. Thus Portugal was forced to make do with outdated and obsolescent equipment,

much of it of Second World War origin. On the other hand, her various insurgent adversaries received extensive training and a generous supply of relatively modern equipment from the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Algeria and their African neighbours. Despite the odds, the Portuguese generally performed very well.

When the Portuguese finally made their decision to grant independence to their colonies in 1974, they were, ironically, in their best military position. In Angola the Portuguese were close to victory; in Mozambique they had forced a stalemate; and in Guiné-Bissau they were turning the tide in their favour. However, the Portuguese people had lost the will to continue these wars; and within a year Portuguese troops suddenly withdrew from Africa, setting the stage for the turmoil in their former colonies which had lasted almost until the present day.

## PARA-QUEDISTAS

The Portuguese paras were one of several Flite units to fight in the African wars. The Portuguese were heavily influenced by the French, and employed their units according to the counter-insurgency doctrines developed in Indochina and Algeria. This doctrine called for a series of outposts to be established in a grid pattern, garrisoned by conventional

troops. To back these troops up there were 'intervention' units, controlled by the central high command and used at its discretion for search-and-destroy operations, raids, emergency support, and other special missions. In the Portuguese African territories the special training and air transportable nature of the paratroops made them ideal for the Flite reserve/quick reaction role.

Portuguese paratrooper training followed a mix of French and American doctrinal practices. While early paratrooper cadres had been trained in Spain in 1954, the instructors were trained in France. The first parachute unit was officially established in 1956. After this, further cadres were trained in Brazil in 1957, where they adopted

American practices. Consequently, it is not surprising that the Portuguese displayed a mix of French and American equipment.

## Uniform and equipment

In 1956 the paras adopted combat clothing of the French 'lizard' pattern, 1947/51 series. They were the first units in the Portuguese armed forces to wear camouflage uniforms. In 1960 the Portuguese Air Force

*Northern Angola, 1961; a typical Portuguese paratrooper — see colour fig. A. This soldier wears the new Portuguese version of the 1947/51 series French paratrooper uniform. He has the green and ochre face veil around his neck, an M1C helmet, an AR10 rifle slung over his shoulder, and American surplus M1943 web gear. His camouflaged trousers are tucked into his paratrooper boots, modelled on the US Corcoran pattern. (Miguel Machado Collection)*







Private Castanheira, Eastern Angola, 1973. Castanheira wears the 1966 uniform, simplified from the 1960 version. The most noticeable difference from 1961 is that the protection of the helmet has been abandoned in favour of the comfort and better hearing of the 'Bigeard'-style cap. The face veil is hung loosely around the neck for better ventilation. The web gear is no longer US surplus, but the Portuguese-made copy; note the slightly different adjustment fittings on the straps. Other additions are an extra canteen, and a bone-handled knife in a natural leather sheath hung from his suspenders. His trousers are worn outside his boots, secured by tied draw strings which dangle outside them. (Sgt. Castanheira Collection)

bat harness and 'buttpacks'. From photographs, it seems that the M1956 equipment was more commonly used by BCP 12 (Batalhao de Cacadores Para-Quedistas No. 12) in Guiné-Bissau than in the other territories. Copies of the M1956 harness were also manufactured in Portugal. The Portuguese did not distinguish between the US M1943 and M1956 web gear, and termed both generically '*equipo tipo US*' (US style equipment).

Parachuting gear was a mix of French and US types. The most common helmet was the MIC paratrooper version, though smaller numbers of French M1951 steel helmets were also used. The Portuguese also used a French padded cloth training jump helmet. Operationally, helmets were only worn during the Angola campaign of 1961-1962 and on parachute drops. While they were available, the troops avoided them, preferring to trade their protection for comfort and better hearing.

Parachutes were of both French and US origin. The American T-10 was used between 1956 and 1966, gradually replaced from 1964 by the French TAP EFA 669 and 665. These were used until 1974. In 1969 the Portuguese adopted the TAP EFA 672. Most kit bags were of US origin. Other common items of issue were an olive green plastic poncho, a green and ochre face veil, an olive green wool blanket, and a US type sleeping bag. The latter was rarely carried in the field.

Originally the paras had been equipped with the

Portuguese-designed FPB sub-machine gun. This unremarkable weapon was not well liked, and seldom, if ever, carried on operations in Africa: it was mainly used for ceremonial and guard purposes. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, in 1960, the Air Force acquired several thousand AR-10s (the American designed, Dutch-manufactured 762mm NATO predecessor to the M16). These were very popular weapons with the paras. With the rapid expansion of the airborne troops there were only enough AR10s to equip two of the four African paratrooper battalions, BCP 21 and 31. The weapons were so well liked that when the Portuguese began running out of spare parts the Air Force manufactured its own, keeping the weapons operational until 1975. The other two battalions, BCP 12 and 32, were armed with German designed G3s with telescopic butt stocks.

Other para weapons included the MG42/59 machine gun, the American 3.5in. rocket launcher, and the 60mm mortar. The well-tested MG42 again proved its worth in the jungles of Africa. However, the 3.5in. bazooka was despised for the size and clumsiness of both the weapon and the ammunition. In 1965 BCP 21 adopted a 37mm rocket launcher designed by a French Portuguese commando instructor, Dante Vachi. The weapon was made locally and fired MATRA SNEB rockets already in use by the Air Force. Both the weapon and ammunition were much lighter than their American predecessor and became very popular with the paras. In 1966 the weapon appeared in Guiné-Bissau, and by 1967 it began replacing 3.5in. rocket launchers in Mozambique. In Guiné-Bissau BCP 12 also used captured RPG2s and RPG7s.

During the latter 1960s the Portuguese also acquired H&K 21 light machine guns and Spanish Instalaza rifle grenades; both items greatly increased para firepower. The Portuguese also used two types of hand grenades: the M/962 offensive grenade, and the

began manufacturing a slightly modified version of this uniform locally, and in 1966 further small modifications were made to simplify the uniform in pocket details, etc. The khaki ground colour and lightish green and red-brown pattern of the French camouflage was changed to a light and dark olive green overprint on a khaki/green ground, to blend in better with the jungles of Portuguese Africa.

Paratrooper combat harness and packs were US surplus Second World War and Korean M1943 models, with BAR ammunition belts to accommodate 20-round 762mm NATO magazines. The US pistol belt, canteen and cover, and three-pocket grenade pouch were also used. When supplies of the surplus items ran out the air Force had exact copies manufactured in Portugal; and later acquired quantities of US M1956 com-

Corporal Afonso carrying the very unpopular US 3.5in. rocket launcher: Niassa, Mozambique, 1966. Afonso is wearing the US surplus pistol belt and the three-pocket grenade pouch. Bazooka and mortar men also carried the Walther P38 pistol.



M/1963 defensive grenade. The first was a tubular device with a green plastic body, resembling a shortened US smoke grenade; the second was similar to the US M26 series fragmentation grenades. Grenades were used generously, especially in the short, bitter fire-fights that resulted from ambushes. Other miscellaneous weapons included shotguns; there were no issue shotguns, but the BCPs purchased commercial weapons for their troops with private funds. The Remington 1100 automatic was popular, but other models including double-barrel types were used as well.

### Training

Paratrooper training was generally a six-month course that included basic training (11 weeks), counter-insurgency training (eight weeks) and jump school (four weeks). This was the general pattern, slightly modified by changing doctrine and needs. The first four weeks of basic training were dedicated to instilling military spirit and bearing into the recruit. The next four weeks were spent learning basic military skills, leading up to the third phase of three weeks of basic combat training.

After basic training was completed the recruits were

*Corporal Martins of BCP 32 on a road march in Mozambique, carrying the standard para squad machine gun, the MG42/59. (Corporal Martins Collection).*

sent to counter-insurgency school. The first five weeks were spent learning counter-insurgency combat skills; the next three, trying to simulate the counter-insurgency environment to give the troops a feel for what real combat was like. After this phase the soldiers were given a week to prepare for jump school. Once in jump school, the first three weeks were spent on physical training and technical training, with the final week dedicated to executing parachute jumps. It was not until after the recruit had completed the whole six-month course that he was sworn in as a member of the paratroops.

### OPERATIONS

Accurately reading the tea-leaves, the Portuguese began to prepare for the eventual contingency of having to rapidly reinforce their African colonies against pro-independence rebellions. In 1959 the Air Force conducted an exercise to test and demonstrate its ability to conduct such an operation. Operation 'Himba' consisted of a company-size para-



*A para combat group of BCP 31 breaking formation to go on an operation near a church in Nangololo, Mozambique, 1967. Note the man at left foreground wearing his 'Bigear' cap backwards. The bearded NCO or officer and the second man from the*

*right are carrying large blue plastic canteens on their packs; these supplemented the smaller US canteens. The bearded junior leader is also carrying a US walkie-talkie slung on top of his pack.*







Eastern Angola, 1973: paras discuss their next move with two blacks in Portuguese uniforms and apparently civilian shoes; these are native guides. The man in the centre carrying an AK47 is Captain Lonsada, who received Portugal's highest decoration, the *Torres and Swords*. Note poncho rolled over top of US M1943 combat pack, and extra canteen attached to entrenching tool tab. (Sgt. Castanheira Collection)



Two paras from BCP 12 pose for the camera in Guinea. The man on the left carries on RPG7 rocket launcher probably captured from PAIGC guerrillas, although it may possibly be one of a batch of these weapons purchased by Portugal directly from the Soviet Union! The RPG7 was much liked by Portuguese paras. This soldier wears the standard Soviet pack for carrying RPG rounds, a US pistol belt and canteen, and a Walther P38. His comrade has a telescopic-butt G3 rifle with wooden forestock; he wears US M1956 web suspenders with US BAR belt and a two-pocket US grenade pouch.

troop drop accompanied by strafing and bombing demonstrations. The lessons learned from this exercise were to be put into practice much sooner than most Portuguese had anticipated.

In March 1961 a rebellion led by Holden Roberto's *União das Populações de Angola* (UPA) swept the countryside like a grass fire. Thousands of black insurgents armed with *catanas* (machetes), home-made shotguns, and a sprinkling of modern weapons overran white farms and settlements and massacred both whites, and blacks loyal to them. It was the Portuguese nightmare come true. With few, if any troops available to reinforce the local garrison, and more time needed to raise a sufficiently large and appropriately equipped force, the local garrison and settlers had to try to hold out. The Portuguese Air Force was the only branch in a condition to respond quickly to the emergency and dispatched several units to the beleaguered colony. Among these were companies of paratroopers: 1a CCP in March 1961 and 2a and 3a CCP the following month. Before a sufficiently large expeditionary force could be sent, and go on the offensive against the rebels, the Air Force played a crucial role in shoring up the sagging local defences.

While Portuguese planes bombed and strafed large enemy concentrations and air-dropped ammunition and supplies to beleaguered points, the paras were divided up to garrison vulnerable towns, or sent to relieve besieged outposts. In the latter case these marches were often arduous, as the insurgent forces ambushed approach routes, destroyed all bridges, dug trenches and laid obstacles across the roads. As fresh army troops slowly arrived, the paratroopers were gradually relieved of these duties and held in strategic reserve.

In May 1961, it was decided to form paratroopers in Angola into a permanent Angolan Battalion designated 21 Batalhão de Caçadores Para-Quedistas (BCP): this designation stood for the 1st Battalion

*The paras often used captured weapons; here two men from BCP 12 slogging through the swamps of Guiné carry on RPG7 and a Degtyarev LMG captured from PAIGC rebels. The second man wears the Air Force paratroopers' distinctive green beret, seldom seen in combat. (Official History of the Paratroops, Vol. IV, BCP 12)*



of Light Infantry Parachutists of the 2nd Aerial Region. The Portuguese Air Force divided its areas of responsibility into three command regions. The first consisted of Metropolitan Portugal, the Azores islands, Madeira, Cabo Verde and Guiné-Bissau; the second covered Angola, and the third Mozambique, and Portugal's Pacific possessions of Macau and Timor. Eventually the Portuguese established four BCPs numbered 12, 21, 31 and 32: plans were made to create further para units, but these were scrapped with the cessation of hostilities in 1975.

When fighting broke out in Guiné-Bissau in 1963, a platoon of paras (No. 111) were dispatched to contribute to the war in that area. In two years this platoon was expanded to company size; and in October-December 1966 a complete battalion — BCP 12 — was formed. In 1964 war broke out in Mozambique. In 1963 the detachment of paras based at Lourenço Marques had been formed into BCP 31, and the headquarters transferred to Beira in November 1966. Finally, in January 1967, BCP 32 was created at Nacala in Mozambique. All these units came under the administrative command of the RCP ('R' for Regimento) based at Tancos. At Tancos there was also BCP 11 — the metropolitan para unit — along with a training battalion designated 1 BI, a personnel company, a logistics unit and a recruiting and mobilization station.

### **Jumps**

As in many wars, despite the paratroopers' primary mission being to carry out combat parachute operations, the Portuguese paras jumped relatively infrequently — mostly in the first two years of the war — and were more usually employed as Flite infantry. However, with a build-up of available helicopters from 1963

this became their main vehicle for vertical assault.

In 1961 and 1962 BCP 21 made four combat jumps. Soon after its official formation the battalion went into action in support of the counter-offensive launched by the finally ready army expeditionary force from Portugal. The first major objective taken by the expeditionary force was the town of Nambuanguongo, which the insurgents had turned into a headquarters. The paras' mission was support this drive by seizing the town of Quipedro, further in the enemy rear, by parachute assault, and to hold it until an armoured column of the 149th Cavalry detachment could link up.

On 11 August 1961 the 1st Company of BCP 21 made a jump 600 metres outside Quipedro. The jump went smoothly. The 1st Company, in C-54s, overflew their DZ; and before they jumped strafing and bombing runs were made by PV-2s, followed by the launching of the pathfinder section. The section made sure the DZ was clear and then marked it with orange signal panels formed in a 'T'. They also marked the boundaries with smoke pots. The rest of the company jumped, including the company commander, and their supplies were air-

dropped to them. Once the company was assembled and supplies distributed, the 1st and 3rd Platoons marched uneventfully into town, where they took up positions and waited for the cavalry to arrive. The cavalry finally reached the town after (unlike the paras) overcoming serious obstacles and suffering several ambushes on the road.

On 25 August, the 2nd Company made a jump following the same procedure at Serra de Canda. The mission was to clear an important hill of terrorist forces, link up with the cavalry and build a small airstrip. All missions were accomplished with no losses due to insurgent action. However, one man died when his parachute failed to open; and another's static line got stuck in the door, causing him to dangle out the side of the plane like a puppet. This corporal calmly cut himself free from the twisted line and pulled out his reserve. He landed safely and was rescued by a light evacuation helicopter.

On 5 September a platoon of paratroopers jumped at Sacandica, a remote government outpost 25 kilometres from the Congo border that had been taken by the terrorists in the early days of the rebellion. Their mission was, again,

to hold the post for 20 days — if necessary — until ground forces could relieve them. At first they had to fight off a large contingent of insurgents, but these soon lost heart, and within a few days the paras were relieved.

On 17 April 1962 a company jump was made at Banza Quina to raid an insurgent command base. The unit jumped through low cloud cover onto a LZ covered in tall grass. While the paras recovered their parachutes and reorganized they were protected by aircraft making strafing and bombing runs. Once the company was organized they fanned out to clear the area. Only one group had a short fight, with an insurgent burial party, and took three prisoners; the rest of the guerrillas fled. The guerrilla camp was found and weapons and documents captured.

Because of the lack of opposition during these operations, the Portuguese high command decided that such jumps were only marginally useful. Even though ground was taken, hardly any enemy forces were destroyed; in reality the parachute drops had made little difference, primarily due to the loss of surprise. Furthermore, the time it took to reassemble the troops gave the insurgents time to disappear from the



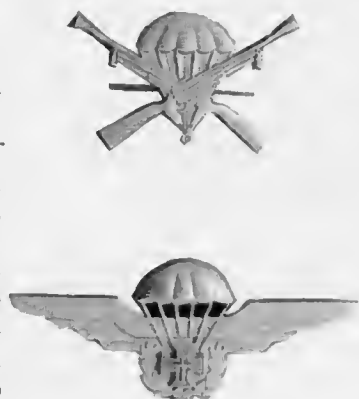
paratroopers' area of operations.

Relatively few combat jumps were made during the remainder of the African wars after BCP 21's initial experience. Furthermore, the arrival of Alouette III troop helicopters in 1963 made parachute drops generally unnecessary for most Portuguese needs. Even so, several other parachute drops were made. An interesting drop/helicopter operation was carried out in Guiné-Bissau in 1966 during Operation 'Samurai'.

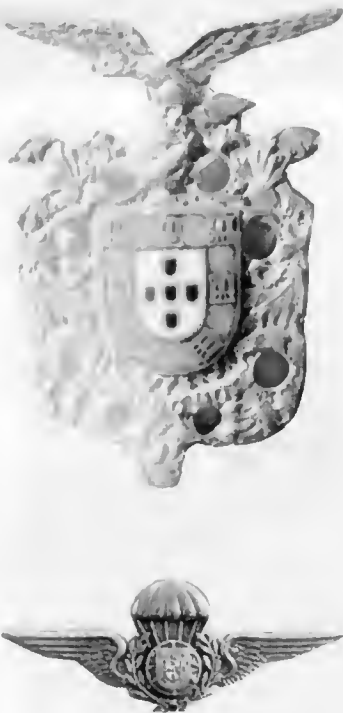
Because of the lack of army presence on Como Island, the Party for the Independence of Guiné and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) guerrillas had virtually taken over the area, and were harassing the local army post at Cachil at least twice a week. It was feared that a final assault would be made on the fort, so a plan was devised to relieve the pressure partly by the insertion of the Guiné-based company of paratroopers. The operation was preceded by four days of bombing and strafing on pre-reconnoitered targets, after which a company jump was made on the air strip at Cufar. The next day the company, divided into three combat groups, was heli-lifted to attack various objectives around the island. Most were taken without resistance, but the 2nd Group ran into stiff resistance at Cassaca. The group called for reinforcements and air support, both of which arrived simultaneously. Combined with the reinforcements (3rd Group) the paras cleared the area with support from T-6 trainer/bombers. Once this was accomplished, and after all objectives had been taken, the paras marched to the garrison at Cachil, where they were helicoptered back to the strip at Cufar.

#### Operations in 1969

In 1969 the largest parachute drop of the war was mounted in Mozambique, codenamed Operation 'Zeta'. The 2a CCP and two platoons of 1a CCP of BCP 32, with 1a CCP of BCP 31, jumped on 7 June on a DZ in the Malambuage swamp on the southern bank of the Rovuma River. This was the first parachute operation conducted in Mozambique. The



(Top) First pattern beret badge in yellow metal, worn 1955-61. (Below) First pattern paratrooper's wings, in yellow metal with red-enamelled cross, worn 1955-61.



(Top) Second pattern beret badge, worn 1961-66: basically yellow metal with red enamel details and white central shield. (Below) Second pattern paratrooper's wings, worn 1961-66: yellow metal, with red and white details on central shield. Post-1966 insignia will be illustrated in Part 2 of this article.

objective was to penetrate an area that ground forces had failed to enter, not only because of the difficulty of the terrain, but also because of the resistance of a strong group of FRELIMO guerrillas. In part, the

large jump was designed to frighten the enemy with the impressive sight of over 250 parachutists floating to the ground. Preceded by the standard aerial bombardment and insertion of a pathfinder platoon by helicopter, four Nord-Atlas and three C-47 Dakotas delivered the whole force in one pass. Some of the grass on the DZ was over nine feet tall, and the reassembly of troops was somewhat confusing. Resistance was light. The next day the 2a CCP of BCP 31 was helicoptered to an area east of the DZ. They conducted a thorough sweep of the zone, and in the process uncovered one of the largest caches of weapons to be discovered during the war.

On 12 August 1969 the 1a CCP of BCP 31 made a combat jump on the banks of the Rovuma River to the east of Nangade, while the 2a CCP was brought in by helicopter. Little contact was made with the enemy, and only four rifles were captured. The only distinguishing characteristic of this jump was that it was made without the aid of pathfinders; previous thorough air reconnaissance provided to be sufficient, and all the paras made it safely onto the drop zone in one pass.

While this list of combat jumps is probably not complete, it does reveal the general pattern of operations. In the authors' opinion, the negligible number of enemy killed in these operations was due to the Portuguese employing conventional jump tactics against an unconventional enemy. These tactics were designed to be used against an enemy who stood and held ground, not one to whom the taking of ground was irrelevant. By the time the drop zone had been strafed, the jump made and the troops assembled, the enemy had sufficient time to disappear. Much better results would probably have been obtained if, like the Rhodesians, they had placed stop groups by helicopter on likely avenues of escape and used the strafing and parachute troops to drive the enemy into the stop groups. **MI**

To be continued

Paul Hannon's reconstructions opposite show (A) Paratrooper, Batalhao de Caçadores PAra-Quedistas No. 21, in Angola, early 1960s. He wears the standard OD-painted American M1C helmet with crossed chin strapping. The large net veil/scarf, in lightish green with large, well-defined ochre areas, was characteristic of the paratroops. French Army surplus jump uniform is in light khaki with green and red-brown overprinting; the smock could be either M1947/51, 52 or 53 pattern; the trousers, with three small pockets on the front of the thighs and left hip in addition to the cargo pockets, are M1947/52 pattern. The boots are black Portuguese copies of the US 'Corcorans'. Web gear is of US origin, of mixed dates, and includes suspenders, BAR belt, canteen, and three-pocket grenade pouch. The weapon is the US Dutch AR10.

(B) Paratrooper, BCP 12; Guiné, late 1960s. The Portuguese-made 1966 pattern camouflage jump uniform differs in cut only slightly from the French M1947/56: it has two-snap pockets, no hem drawstring, and no small 'cigarette' pocket on the face of the left breast pocket. The pattern made an overall 'green' impression, though if closely examined showed a light khaki-green ground overprinted with light green and dark green, the latter two colours showing dark brown areas where they were superimposed. Webbing is the US pistol belt and suspenders M1956, two canteens, and a simple backpack holding rounds for the 37mm rocket launcher (10 or 12 depending on manufacturer), with a spare-cut flap over the sectional body. A Mauser pistol was issued to rocket launcher crews, and is carried in a leather holster on the belt; a horn-handled hunting knife of private purchase is carried on the right hip, and an M1962 offensive grenade on the left suspender. A folded olive poncho was characteristically worn over the rear of the belt. Portuguese jungle shoes of brown suede and black rubber are worn; the trouser legs are laced tight at the ankles.

The hat is the 'BCP 12 Panama', popular with this unit and locally made out of old camouflage material; it was worn as an alternative to the 'Bigard'-style cap of the regulation uniform seen in the accompanying photographs. The 37mm rocket launcher developed by Váchi was available to BCP 21 in Angola in 1965 and in Guiné by the following year. The type shown is one of several slightly varying models, made in different armories both in Portugal and the African colonies.

Battalion crests were at this date only 'semi-official', usually worn on the left breast of walking-out dress, either pinned directly to the pocket or on a braiter pocket fob; they seldom feature in photographs of troops parading in 'balded up' combat uniform. They are (C) BCP 12, (D) BCP 21, (E) BCP 31, and (F) BCP 32.

A



C



D



B



E



F





# The Work of Bill Ottinger

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s there was one thing that the world's best modellers all had in common — a mastery of the art of the 54mm Historex conversion. Vignettes and dioramas, as well as mounted and foot figures based on Historex components, were the best pieces seen at shows on both sides of the Atlantic. However, in the past ten years the proliferation of outstanding stock figures, particularly in the larger scales, have largely pushed the art of the Historex conversion from the front ranks of the hobby. Many of those Historex 'masters' such as Ray Lamb, Peter Twist, Sheperd Paine, and a host of others have since turned their attention to larger scales, and to sculpting masters for production. However, there are still a few modellers who continue to 'tend the flame' of the art of Historex, with all its colour, drama and potential. In the United States there is no more dedicated and enthusiastic living proof of the continued promise of the Historex conversion than Bill Ottinger.

For the past nine years Bill has devoted his modelling efforts exclusively to Historex conversion work. During that period his outstanding vignettes and mounted figures have consistently garnered top awards at the MFCA and Atlanta Shows, as well as the

prestigious Chicago Show. In 1986 Bill was named a Grand Master of the Atlanta Soldier Society, an organization he co-founded in the mid 1970s. And in 1989 he received the coveted title of Chicago Medalist, putting him among the acknowledged leaders of the American military miniature scene.

As with many modellers, Bill's modelling roots are grounded in an enduring love of history, a subject in which he majored at university. In particular, World War I aviation, and of course Napoleonic history, were areas of special interest. In 1968 Bill wandered into a hobby shop in Washington DC and got his first glimpse of model soldiers, in the form of a small collection of Imrie-Risley figures. He was hooked: from that point, Bill's interest in history and art became fused into a passion for the art of the military miniature.

As his interest in the hobby grew Bill — who is currently Senior Vice President of Boatman's Trust Bank in St. Louis, Missouri — drew inspiration from the many fine Historex modellers of the period, particularly Sheperd Paine, Ray Lamb, Max Longhurst and Peter Twist. Bill also points to a great admiration for the medieval and ancient figures of

*Napoleon with Davout. (All photographs courtesy of the author)*



*Colonel Marbot, 23rd Chasseurs.*

Peter Wilcox as superb examples of what can be accomplished in miniature.

Although Bill's figures rely heavily upon the wide range of available Historex accessories, he takes great pleasure in super-detailing each one by adding to existing parts, reworking portions of them, or even replacing stock components with scratchbuilt substitutes. White A & B epoxy putty is Bill's primary sculpting medium. A much finer version of the more commonly used 'tan' A & B, this putty enables Bill to get very smooth transitions in blended areas, and to add details for which the considerably more 'grainy' tan putty would be inadequate. Belts and straps are fashioned from 5000 gauge sheet plastic, as well as common Xerox paper. Bill also makes use of sculpting tools more commonly seen in the dentist's surgery. In particular, minute root canal files make outstanding and

very durable drills for his Dremel tool.

Bill's painting is accomplished almost exclusively with Winsor & Newton artist oil colours. He finds the vividness of the colour its most important benefit, and the ease of blending makes it a very reliable medium in which to work. As Napoleonic figures run the gamut of colour, a medium well suited to blending precise shades of a wide variety of colours is extremely important, and oils certainly offer this to the painter. Before painting is done, Bill prefers to undercoat all areas of the figure in water-based Polly S matt colours.

In all, each Ottinger mounted figure takes at least 100 hours of painstaking work, and typically comprises approximately 150 individual pieces — a statistic Bill once took the time to add up. Attention to





**Above:**  
*General of Carabiniers.*



**Below:**  
*Trumpeter, 6th Chasseurs.*

detail is the key enjoyment for Bill, and there are few topics more likely to bring a twinkle to his eye than a question about a particularly fine little touch he has added to a piece. 'I just love the challenge of the 54mm

figure', Bill emphasizes.

Another major interest of Bill's is the collecting of military illustrations and paintings. His collection includes original works by many of the top illustrators in the world today,

including Angus McBride, Gerry Embleton, Rick Scollins, Jim Payette, Keith Rocco, Chris Warner and many others. Bill draws inspiration from the flair and style evinced by these talented artists, and his collection is an obvious source of pride.

As Bill has spent many years in the hobby both as a club official and a modeller/exhibitor, he has become an outspoken advocate for 'de-tensifying' competitions. Specifically, he believes, 'This is really just a hobby, and very often people can lose sight of that fact'. While he realises that competitions are an important proving ground for up-and-coming modellers, the actual act of competing has become irrelevant to Bill. The many friendships he has formed over the years, and the pleasure of sharing a real affection for a special art form with fellow enthusiasts, are the most gratifying things about the hobby. He is a very strong advocate of the open system of competition, as the best means of selecting the best work on show. But most of all, Bill feels that the quality and knowledgeability of judges is a crucial element — a strong dose of good old fashioned common sense being the major prerequisite.

Bill still gets a chuckle out of the well-known story of a particularly dedicated yet down-to-earth modeller who, typically collecting numerous awards in the south-eastern United States, subsequently pried loose the medals so that the bases could be used for new figures! To Bill Ottinger that's a successful modeller, who doesn't take it all too seriously.

For those who have been lucky enough to get to know Bill at the Chicago Show, the first impression one forms is of a modeller who truly loves the military miniature art. He conveys an irresistible openness in sharing his techniques, ideas and knowledge literally with anyone who approaches him. One need only look at the continuing excellence of his work — after nearly 20 years in the hobby — to realize that Bill Ottinger is a very rare artist indeed.

**Bill Horan**

## Military Miniatures Reviewed

**Barreira, 1:32/54mm.  
CE/4: Official de Los  
Tercios de Flandes, 1598.  
Barreira Militar, a,  
C/Mayor No 4 (piso 5o),  
28013 Madrid (tel: 531 39  
27), Spain.**

This is the first model I have examined from the Escuadron range of Spanish manufacturer Barreira Militar, designed by Miguel del Rey. It depicts a splendid Spanish horseman of the late 16th century, wearing steel cuirass, wide-brimmed hat and ornate clothing typical of the period.

The kit is boxed in a very sturdy cardboard carton, while the parts are further protected with generous amounts of bubble wrapping and the smallest pieces enclosed in a separate plastic sachet. There are, in all, 17 parts to the kit; and although this is not, perhaps, a very first kit for a beginner, assembly is quite straightforward as long as the work is not rushed. The historical notes, assembly and painting instructions, together with a clear line drawing of the rider and close-up details of saddlery, dress and weapons (with further colour captions) were only reproduced in Spanish in the sample submitted. As there is no photograph supplied of the completed model, and this reviewer has never ventured to the Iberian peninsula, a simple Spanish/English dictionary had to be acquired before most details were understood. (The line drawings include extra details — weapons, helmet, flag, etc — which may challenge the ambitious modeller to convert his kit into a unique variation on the basic theme.)

The rider, with legs astride, is a one-piece casting requiring only the affixing of separate spurs, sword and stirrups (with leathers) to complete. The horse comes in three pieces: the neck and head, which has headcollar and bridle cast on; and the two body halves, each incorporating half the saddle and surcingle, while the right-hand half also bears the tail. Other pieces include two pistols in their holsters, two saddlebags, two delicately cast side pieces of the bit, plus an oblong textured base, and a strip of thin sheet tin from which reins can be cut. All pieces are nicely cast, with very little 'pitting' evident, but they do require a small amount of careful cleaning up to remove a minuscule amount of 'flash' together with mould lines.

Detail throughout the castings is clean and crisp, and both horse and rider are very well proportioned, the horseman having a nicely modelled aristocratic face with characteristic pointed beard and moustaches, and a wide-brimmed hat decorated with large, sharply engraved feathers. Before horse and rider are finally mounted remember to fix the stirrups to the feet and then gently manipulate and trim the leathers before sticking them to the insides of the rider's thighs. Of course, as with any mounted figure, it is essential to paint horseman and steed



A



C



B



D





separately before fixing one to the other or you will be faced with virtually insurmountable problems when trying to apply paint to the less accessible nooks and crannies.

The parts of the horse go together reasonably snugly but will require a certain amount of filing and filling when the three main pieces have been assembled. A peg has been cast on the underside of the left fore hoof, but as there are only hoofprints indented on the base section and no precise indication where the locating hole should be drilled, some adjustment may be necessary before the steed stands firmly and squarely on the base. The sculpting of the horse is first rate, with sinews and muscles cleanly and very convincingly defined. When complete, the horse is a splendid beast and, although stationary, captures beautifully the sense of nervous energy of a mettlesome animal, the neck and head raised as though held on a tight rein.

All in all, these castings will make up into an excellent and colourful model of a quite unusual period, and will certainly repay careful painting to produce a piece worthy of most collections.

#### Andrea Miniatures

C/Joseph Diaz 12, 28038 Madrid, Spain

S8-F01: Knight Templar, c.1150, 90mm. Price ptas. 4,000 (about £21.00)

The Knights of the Order of the Temple were formed in the early 12th century for the protection of pilgrims

in the Holy Land and the defence of the Holy Sepulchre. The warrior-monks, drawn from the knightly classes of Western Europe, adopted the rule of the Benedictine Order and wore a white mantle with a red cross. In England their Temple Church in London is built in circular form like the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; it contains a fine memorial to the Crusader knight William Marshall who fought in the Holy Land 1183-7.

Sergio Blanco, the designer, has made a solid, conventional job of illustrating Andrea Miniatures' Templar. There are no surprises or visual fireworks here, but this is a well produced figure. The quality of the modelling is very good, and the parts are well cast in good quality metal, giving fine definition of detail and a good surface. The model is thoughtfully engineered and the parts fit together well. Packaging is excellent; instructions and painting details are in English; and a coloured photo is included on the box — altogether a professional product.

The sculptor has injected a good deal of mobility even into the reflective pose chosen for the grim-faced Templar. He has a convincing sculptural presence, in the style of the public sculpture of our city squares. However, when examined in close-up the model may be felt to lack that 'extra' that the miniaturist has come to expect from a state-of-the-art figure kit: those extra bits 'just for fun' that make the figure painter exclaim 'Ah, I bet he enjoyed making that bit!' Detail is crisply handled, though the sculptor doesn't seem

too happy when representing ring-mail. This is way over scale, and some areas of mail on the arms are less than adequately handled. The sword pommel is not of 12th century type, and seems in fact to belong to the realm of imagination. Historical accuracy obviously contributes greatly towards the conviction of a model.

#### Historex

Word had just come through from France that Historex Aeros SA of Paris have gone into 'judicial liquidation'. This will be very sad news for thousands of modellers who have had much enjoyment from the superb kits that this company once manufactured.

We understand that Historex Agents in Dover still have good stocks of figures, but will be unable to obtain further stocks unless someone buys the Historex company and starts manufacturing again. Modellers may have noticed over the last few months that Historex Agents have been having some 'special offers' representing opportunities to fill the spare boxes and purchase complete kits at a fraction of the Continental prices.

Historex Agents in Dover would like us to point out that the closure of the Paris company in no way affects their own operation in the UK, and wish to assure their customers that they will receive the same service they always have had in the past. They have, however, asked us to mention that customers ordering Historex would be well advised to give as many alternatives as possible in order to avoid disappointment. **M**



Bill Ottinger's work opposite, all based on 54mm Historex kit parts:

(A) Trumpeter, French Artillery of the Guard.

(B) Brunswick Hussar.

(C) Officer, Lancers of Berg.

(D) 2nd Royal North British Dragoons (Scots Greys).



# German Campaign Shields, 1940-45 (2)

GORDON WILLIAMSON

The first part of this article ('MI' No.46) described and illustrated the shields awarded as campaign decorations for Narvik, 1940; Cholm, 1942; and the Crimea, 1941-42. This concluding part deals with the shields associated with Demjansk, the Kuban, Lapland, Warsaw, the Balkans, Dunkirk and Lorient.

## DEMJANSK SHIELD

In February 1942 the German II Armeekorps under the command of General Graf Brockdorff-Ahlefeld was surrounded by Soviet units at Demjansk, between Kholm and Lake Ilmen on the northern sector of the Russian Front. Amongst the German units cut off were 12., 30., 32., 223. and 290. Infanterie-Divisions and 3.SS-Panzer-Division *Totenkopf*. A total of 96,000 German soldiers were left defending some 300 kilometers of front line in atrocious Russian winter conditions.

The German units held out against overwhelming odds in furious combat, often hand-to-hand; and in recognition of their achievements, on 25 April 1943 Hitler instituted the Demjansk Shield. It comprised an eagle and swastika emblem with folded wings, between two log bunkers, all

over a horizontal plaque bearing the title 'Demjansk'. Below this was a shield-shaped field with two large crossed swords over a head-on view of a stylised aircraft; at the base was the date '1942'.

The award was made in the name of Brockdorff-Ahlefeld and was open to all those who had served in the defence of the Demjansk pocket, who could fulfil the following conditions: (1) had served a minimum of 60 days, unbroken, in the encircled area; or (2) Luftwaffe personnel who had flown a minimum of 50 missions in support of the encircled Army units; or (3) personnel who had been wounded in action. Company commanders were responsible for submitting lists of those in their units who qualified, by 31 December 1943. Awards ceased on 1 April 1944.

Each recipient was presented with a Possession Certificate (*Besitzzeugnis*). There are several variants, but all follow the same basic style of text: 'Im Namen Des Führers/vurdedem/... (rank, name and unit of recipient) ... Der / Demjansk-Schild/Verliehen'. The signature block is that for Graf Brockdorff; the stamp is that of the Generalkommando II Armeekorps, and at the foot of each certificate is a further signature of an Oberleutnant on the Armeekorps Staff certifying the document as correct, 'Für die Richtigkeit'.

Each recipient was entitled



Major Anton Müller, of Grenadier Regiment 503, displays a wide range of decorations including the Demjansk Shield, and the rare cufftitle for the battles of Kurland. (Josef Charina)

to tip to five examples of the shield free of charge for attaching to various uniforms. Further examples could be purchased at the recipient's expense. In the case of posthumous awards one example of the shield plus the certificate was to be sent to the next of kin, regulations stating that this was the responsibility of the fallen soldier's company commanders. This can be seen in the illustrated example of a posthumous award.

## KUBAN SHIELD

The great Soviet counter-offensive which followed the German failure at Stalingrad saw the German forces in the south of the Soviet Union pushed inexorably back towards the Crimean Peninsula. A defensive bridgehead was formed; and as German units poured into this bottleneck a stout defence was maintained against the advancing Soviet units along the Kuban River. This defence held successfully for several months, allowing many

German units to withdraw safely into the Crimea. On 20 September 1943 Hitler recognised this defensive achievement with the following announcement:

'To commemorate the heroic battle in the Kuban Bridgehead, I institute the Kuban Shield. The Kuban Shield will be worn on the left sleeve of the uniform. The Kuban Shield is awarded as a Battle Badge to all members of the Armed Forces and those under the command of the Wehrmacht who, since 1 February 1943 were honourably engaged in the battle for the Kuban Bridgehead on land, in the air or at sea. The award will be made in my name by Generalfeldmarschall von Kleist. The recipient will also receive a Certificate of Possession. Implementation of the awards is through the High Command of the Armed



The Demjansk Shield, here an Army-issued example on fieldgrey backing cloth.

# BESITZZEUGNIS

IM NAMEN DES FÜHRERS

WURDE DEM  
Kraftfahrer

Alex Andersen  
Nachschub-Kp.30

## DER DEMJANSK-SCHILD VERLIEHEN

K.G.St., DEN 31. Dezember 1943



*General der Infanterie*  
General der Infanterie

FÜR DIE RICHTIGKEIT

*Oberleutnant*  
Oberleutnant

Dienststelle  
P.P.Nr. 02098

O.U., den 18.6.1944

Herrn  
Vigo Andersen  
Hamburg 19  
Gärtnerstr. 119a

Für die Besetzung der Festung Demjansk in der Zeit vom 2.2.1942 - Mai 1942 wurde vom Führer in Anerkennung der von den Soldaten hierin vollbrachten Leistungen der Demjanskschild gestiftet.

Die Kompanie erlaubt sich, als Anlage die Ihnen am 2.7.42 gefallenen Bruder Alex, der ehrenvoll seine Pflicht in der Festung erfüllt hat, verleihe Auszeichnung mit Besitzzeugnis zu überreichen.

Oberlt. u. Komp.Fhr.

### Left:

A rare award document for the Demjansk Shield. This is for a posthumous award, as confirmed by an accompanying letter from the recipient's company commander to his next of kin, in this case his brother.

### Below:

One of the principal combat elements at Demjansk was 3.SS-Panzer-Division "Totenkopf". This photograph shows SS-Oberscharführer Fiedler from that formation wearing the Demjansk Shield. (Johann Fiedler)



Forces. Führer Headquarters 20 September 1943. Adolf Hitler.'

The regulations which were drawn up for the award of the Kuban Shield specified that the potential recipient required to have: (1) served for 60 days unbroken in the area; or (2) taken part in a major battle; or (3) been wounded in action. A complicated points system was drawn up for naval and air force personnel in which, for example, a U-Boat attack on convoys of shipping in the Kuban area represented six

points, and being on a boat sunk by enemy action represented 60 points. One point was the equivalent of one day's service.

The shield itself was very similar to the Krim Shield. Bronze in colour, it featured an eagle and swastika emblem with spread wings atop a shield-shaped field. At the top, each side of the wreathed swastika, were the numerals '1943', and below this the title 'KUBAN'. The face of the shield shows a stylised representation of the Kuban River,

and the positions of Novorossiysk, Krimskaja and the swamps ('Lagunen') in the north.

Manufacture was the exact opposite of the Krim Shield, however, the type with four prongs on the reverse being rather scarce, and the type with four tabs along the edge of the shield being prevalent.

The shield was issued along with a Possession Certificate. There is little or no variation to be found amongst examples of this certificate. Rather plain in appearance, it has the follow-

ing text printed in plain black Latin script: 'Im Namen/des Führers/wurde dem... (then follows the rank, name and unit of the recipient) ...der Kubanschild verliehen'. At the foot of the document is the date of the award, the facsimile signature of Generalfeldmarschall von Kleist, and the stamp of Wehrkreiskommando VIII. The reason that this award document wears the stamp of the District Command rather than a front line unit is that a central office for issue of the document.



known as 'Arbeitsstab Kuban-Schild', was established and all certificates were issued from this central point. This probably also explains why only the one principal type of document is encountered.

**LAPPLAND SHIELD**  
The last of the shield awards to see large scale manufacture and issue was that for the battles in the far north of Scandinavia. Here, the 20. Gebirgs-Armee — which included such diverse units as 6. Gebirgs-Division, 270. Infanterie-Division, Panzer-Brigade 'Norwegen' and 14. Luftwaffen-Felddivision amongst many others — was to have its achievements in battle rewarded with the institution by General der Gebirgstruppe France Böhme of a commemorative shield in February 1945. Awards 'on paper' were certainly made before the end of the war; genuine pay book entries for the award are known from April 1945. No actual awards were issued from this time, however.

Following the end of hostilities the large German forces in northern Scandinavia were left largely to their own devices, under the control of their own command structures, which answered to the British authorities. During this period it was decided to proceed with the issue of the Lappland shield. These could, of course, only be produced on what amounted to a 'cottage industry' basis as proper facilities were not available. Clearly, also, the design could not feature the swastika, as the Allies would no doubt be outraged by this. A design was drawn up showing the German eagle, without swastika, atop a shield bearing the title 'LAPPLAND' and a map of the North Cape area. The award itself was very roughly cast in aluminium alloys; some were merely etched on to a shield-shaped blank. Around the edge were several small holes to allow the shield to be stitched to a sleeve. As the earliest known award document dates from July 1945, two months after the war's end, it is unlikely that any

were ever actually worn. Many different types of award document are known, the majority of which (but not all) have the swastika removed from the rubber stamp marking.  
Postwar copies are generally die-stamped in brass with a bronze finish, but it should be noted that some copies in finely cast aluminium are circulating. These are identifiable by being too well cast, with a very smooth reverse finish; originals have a very rough reverse surface.  
This shield is of debatable legitimacy as a national award, as it was only authorised on a local level by the Army Commander, and not issued until after the end of hostilities, which, technically, makes even genuine pieces 'postwar'. In addition there are virtually no established statutes for issue of the award, regulations for its wear or laid down qualifications for entitlement.  
\* \* \*  
In addition to those shields officially manufactured and issued, the following should be

mentioned:  
**Warschauseild**  
This shield was certainly designed, showing a large eagle grasping a snake in its talons. On the eagle's breast is a swastika and a banner with the title 'WARSCHAU'.  
The shield was intended to commemorate the battle for Warsaw following the uprising by the Polish Home Army in August 1944. It was to be awarded to those troops of the 9th Army who, during the period 2 August to 2 October 1944, had: (1) served for a minimum of seven days combat action; or (2) received a gallantry decoration for actions during this period; or (3) been wounded in action; or (4) served for 28 days, unbroken, in the Warsaw area. Luftwaffe personnel who had flown a minimum of 20 combat flights in the area or served for ten days on combat operations would also qualify.  
It cannot now be ascertained whether any examples were actually produced. Those which do appear from time to time are rather crude, heavy,



The Kuban Shield; this dark bronze example is of the standard type, with four small fixing tabs on the edge rather than prongs on the reverse. It is on fieldgrey backing.

The scarce award document for the Kuban Shield, bearing the facsimile signature of Field Marshal Kleist.

**Besitzzeugnis**


Im Namen  
des Führers

Obergefreiten  
wurde dem .....  
(Dienstgrad)

Otto Beraner  
.....  
(Vor- und Familienname)

2. Nachr. Aht. 173  
.....  
(Truppenheit)

der Kubanschild verliehen.

 H.Qu., den 1. 10. 1944.  
*A. Kleist*  
Generalfeldmarschall

# BESITZ-ZEUGNIS

IM NAMEN DES FÜHRERS

WURDE DEM ..... (DIENSTGRAD) .....

..... (VOR- UND FAMILIENNAME) .....

..... (TRUPPENTEIL) .....

DER

DEM JANSKSCILD

VERLIEHEN

DEN ..... (TAGES- UND MONAT) .....



GENERAL DER INFANTRIE

FÜR DIE RICHTIGKEIT:

Wehrkreisdrucker X, Hamburg 13

**Above:**  
A variant of the Demjansk Shield award document; this example has been stamped by the unit, but not filled in. (Arthur Charlton)

**Above right:**  
Oberstleutnant Heinz-Georg Lemm, an Oakleaves winner from Füsilier-Regiment 27, clearly shows the Demjansk Shield on the left sleeve. Lemm went on to serve with the post-war Bundeswehr and reached the rank of Generalleutnant. (Heinz-Georg Lemm)



solid castings of extremely dubious provenance. Award certificates were definitely printed; but according to SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach-Zelewski, who was to have signed the documents, none were ever issued.

## Balkanschild

An original piece of artwork by designer Benno von Arent dated 7 March 1945 establishes that this shield was certainly projected. It shows the legend 'BALKAN' over an SS-style eagle and the dates '1944-1945', all superimposed over a map of the area. There is no hard evidence to show that this shield was ever manufactured or awarded.

## Duenkirschenschild

Regularly misidentified as an arm shield, this small commemorative badge — bearing the title 'DUENKIRLIHEN' at the top of a shield bearing the date '1944' and a stylised tower and waves — was certainly

produced and awarded, but was in fact a cap badge, to be worn on the left side of the field cap. This is confirmed by original *Soldbuch* entries in which it is designated a 'Mützenabzeichen'.

## Lorientchild

A controversial piece, much dispute has raged over the so-called Lorient Shield. Those examples known to collectors show a naked warrior with a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left straddling a stylised U-Boat bunker. At the top is the date '1944' and at the base the title 'LORIENT'.

It was supposedly designed by a naval construction official at the French coastal base to commemorate the defence of Lorient by the 25,000-man garrison from August 1944 until the war's end, and approved by the naval commandant, Admiral Hennecke; as many as 15,000 are claimed to have been manufactured and issued. It is strange, then, that Admiral Hennecke denied all knowledge of this piece when approached for information, and that no photographs

*Oberleutnant zur See Gerd-Dietrich Schneider of the Kriegsmarine wears both the Krim and Kuban Shields on the sleeve of his greatcoat. The former, because of its earlier institution date, is worn above the latter. (Josef Charita)*





of the piece being worn have emerged. Numerous veterans of the Lorient garrison also denied any knowledge of the shield, which would seem significant in view of the numbers allegedly manufactured.

However, it has been known for some time that blank zinc ID discs stamped with the legend 'FESTUNG LORIENT' were issued as commemorative pieces to members of the garrison. Little more information was available until recently, when American researcher Richard Mundschenk obtained from a veteran a German Marine Artillery officer's tunic with the 'FESTUNG LORIENT' ID oval still attached to the sleeve, as well as original photographs of German POWs taken after the fall of the garrison, including some showing personnel wearing the ID oval on the sleeve.

The 'nude-warrior' shield should therefore continue to be regarded with some scepticism.

MI

*An example of the so-called 'nude warrior' version of the Lorient Shield, in this case stamped out of thin white metal sheet.*

*A Lappland Shield, very roughly cast in aluminium alloy and stitched to a piece of fieldgrey cloth by means of five small holes around the edge of the shield.*



# Legio XIII GMV: Roman Legionaries Recreated (2)

DANIEL PETERSON

Continuing from 'MI' No. 46 our series on recreated Roman legionary armour and equipment of the Flavian period, by a founder member of the leading German-based 'living history' group. This part deals with helmets and body armour.

## HELMETS

The most distinctive aspect of any Roman reconstruction group is its armour, and this is the first and most apparent feature by which these groups are often judged. There is a tendency among some of the cur-

rent reconstruction groups to effect an exactly alike, 'Buckingham Palace' degree of uniformity among its members that was probably unknown in the ancient world, except perhaps among e.g. 'palace guards'. Uniformity in the Roman

*The sculptural record of grave stelae makes clear that such senior personnel as centurions, standard-bearers and trumpeters wore ring mail or scale armour during the period when the legionary rank and file wore issued articulated plate cuirasses. Scale armour on a ring mail base, with scales ribbed for strength, may well be the origin of the lorica plumata —*

*'feathered' cuirass — mentioned by ancient writers. This reconstruction is worn by the centurio of the recreated Legio XIII Gemina Martia Victrix; it took nearly 8,000 individual tinned iron scales, mounted on a base of ring mail made up from correctly sized 5mm links. (All photographs courtesy of the author)*





The so-called lorica segmentata (not an ancient term) of Corbridge form allows reasonably free and comfortable movement — though the badly-designed 'collar' plates can chafe the neck, which may explain the legionaries' use of scarves in this period. Here men of the recreated Legio XIII adjust the tension of one of the torsion springs of the unit's reconstructed 'three-span' scorpis, an arrow-shooting support weapon apparently issued one per century within the legion.

Army probably extended only to everyone having a serviceable helmet, weapons, body armour, and shield displaying the same unit emblem, the quality of all being much dependent on the soldier's personal resources. From a distance such soldiers would appear reasonably 'uniform', but upon closer inspection a multitude of subtle differences in patterns, decoration, and materials would soon become apparent.

On the point of authenticity, one of the great advantages in armouring the recreated Legio XIII is that there is so much original material dated to the time and found at the place depicted by the group. One of the greatest deposits of Roman military artifacts anywhere in

the world are the many swords, legionary helmets and other objects dredged from the River Rhine at Mainz. Most of these helmets, and many of the other objects are believed to date to the Flavian period during which Legio XIII was stationed at Mainz. In fact, one inscribed helmet can be dated precisely to the Legio XIII occupation date, as it was lost by a member of Legio I Adiutrix, which shared the fort at Mainz with Legio XIII from 71 and 86 AD.

It was postulated by the late H. Russell Robinson that much of the military equipment found in the Rhine at Mainz was lost due to capsized ferries crossing the river before the bridge was constructed there. If true, the several Flavian period helmets found may even have been lost in the same accident, further reinforcing the theory of considerable variation in helmet types within the same unit.

#### **Imperial Gallic**

The most popular, and probably most common legionary helmet type of the period are those classified a 'Imperial Gallic' due to their clear stylistic descent from similar native Gallic examples. These are

characterized primarily by embossed skull reinforcements above the eyes in the form of stylized 'eyebrows'. Most of the surviving examples are made of iron, though three of bronze also exist. Bronze versions of this type may have been far more common than generally believed today, because obsolete or severely damaged helmets of this costlier metal would normally have been melted down for re-use, whereas iron ones were often just thrown away, (usually after being stripped of their bronze trimmings). This is why the majority of bronze Roman helmets are found in rivers, where circumstances prevented their recovery, whereas archaeology shows that many iron helmets were deliberately discarded along with other 'rubbish'.

As stated above, the precisely Flavian dated Legio I Adiutrix helmet is of considerable importance to Legio XIII, and reconstructions of it are used by the group. Classified by Russell Robinson as the 'Imperial Gallic I', this is essentially a bronze version of an iron Imperial Gallic also found in Germany and classified by Robinson as

the 'II'. Both types exhibit a deep skull and large sloping neckguard which seem to be characteristic of the Flavian period. (See photograph of type 'I' in 'MI' No. 46, p.12.)

A second bronze Imperial Gallic very similar to the Mainz piece was discovered in 1981 at Aquincum in then Roman Pannonia. Excavated with Flavian-dated pottery, though not inscribed, it most likely belonged to a member of Legio II Adiutrix which was stationed there. This is extremely significant as both Legiones I and II Adiutrix were raised from marines in Italy during the chaos immediately before and during the 68-69 AD civil war which ended with the ascendancy of the Flavian dynasty. Both of these helmets, then, were probably made during this period to equip the new legions. They probably represented the current design trend, and duplicated the iron helmets being produced in the Rhineland. Their cruder execution and bronze material clearly suggest Italian reproductions of the current iron helmet being manufactured north of the Alps. This form in



iron, represented by the Gallic 'H', may thus be considered as a current issue helmet for *Legio XIII* in Germany. Therefore it is the most common helmet in use by the group, with some examples of the bronze Gallic 'I' also in use due to the original Fourteenth's sharing of the double legion fort at Mainz with *Legio I Adiutrix*.

All the members of a given legion would not be equipped with the latest helmet designs, so earlier types are also in use, but predominantly those with a Flavian period Mainz location provenance, and therefore likely to have been used by the original *Legio XIII*. These include what is probably the most widely reproduced Imperial Gallic helmet, though only one complete specimen has ever been found (and that also in the Rhine at Mainz), typed by Robinson as the 'G'; he regarded this as 'the typical mid-first century legionary helmet'. This possibly represented the latest in legionary headgear when *Legio XIII* invaded Britain, and

fragments of Boudiccan-revolt date found at Colchester confirm its use in Britain.

#### Imperial Italic

In addition to the Imperial Gallic line of helmets, Flavian date legionaries would also use those designated by Robinson as of 'Imperial Italic' type. These resemble the Gallic types in general shape, but lack the characteristic 'eyebrows'; and have design features attributed more to an Italian provenance, such as socketed 'twist-on' crest holders, side plumes, and generally cruder workmanship.

An important 'Italic' helmet with possible *Legio XIII* association is the Imperial Italic 'D' also found in the Rhine at Mainz. This helmet is most distinctive, with its liberal use of sheet brass decoration in the form of temples, eagles and crossbands. The two eagles flanking the front of the skull each hold a victory wreath in their bills, which may be an association with *Legio XIII's* 'Martia Victrix' title earned for service in the Boudiccan revolt.

At first glance one might imagine that this elaborate helmet is unique; but a very similar example, though discarded and stripped of its brass decoration, was found at Ilfheim not far from Mainz. Another cheek-piece, slightly different from that of the Italic 'D' from the Rhine but with the same temple motif, was found at Mainz. In the archaeological record, these three finds are enough to suggest the manufacture of a considerable number of this style of helmet. This design carried over into the 2nd century, as can be seen in a very similar helmet found at Grimidi in North Africa.

Another helmet used by the group, though with perhaps less convincing *Legio XIII* associations is the Imperial Italic 'C'. Two slightly different examples of this helmet were found in the River Po at Cremona, in all likelihood lost during the civil war battles there in 69 AD. As *Legio XIII* was in Italy during this period there is at least some possibility that this type was in service with the legion. Its short horizontal neckguard and other features probably date it to the 40s to 50s AD.

#### Coolus helmets

A fairly antiquated helmet by the late 1st century is the Coolus model; yet one example found at Frankfurt has design features which would suggest that it was contemporary with mid-1st century Imperial Gallic helmets, and therefore could have seen use with *Legio XIII* in the Flavian period. It is at least possible that in long-established legions like the Fourteenth recruits were issued used, older pattern helmets and other equipment, and if they wished to improve their kit, did so that their own expense.

#### Materials

At this point the cupric alloys used in Roman armour should be mentioned. It seems to be a common misconception that the metal we know today as brass is of modern origin and was not used by the Romans. This is patently untrue. Brass, a

copper-zinc alloy, was in common use during the 1st century AD, and military equipment such as belt plates and *lorica segmentata* hinges and fittings were definitely made of this metal.

However, the author believes that too much brass is being used by most reconstruction groups as a substitute for the more common cooper-tin alloy, bronze. While some very thin 'parade and sports' helmets are made of brass, as are decorations on some iron legionary service helmets, most, if not all of the service helmets used throughout the Roman era were made of bronze. The colours of these alloys are distinctly different, and *Legio XIII* has gone to great lengths to insure that its bronze helmets are, in fact, made of bronze, rather than less authentic brass substitutes.

#### Crests

All of the above-mentioned helmets were fitted to take a 'fore and aft' crest, most probably made of horse hair. It is these crest mounts which tend to classify these as legionary rather than auxiliary helmets, as some contemporary helmets completely lack mountings for crests. Perhaps only legionaries and praetorians were privileged to wear crests on their helmets.

Crest colours may have varied from legion to legion, or even from cohort to cohort, which like different tunic and shield colours would be useful to a legion commander in quickly discerning a particular cohort's location on the battlefield — though this cannot be substantiated. Crests of natural colours such as white, black and brown are to be expected, though Roman artwork shows crests of such exotic colours as blue, and yellow is mentioned as a cavalry crest colour. *Legio XIII* is only now equipping all of its legionaries with crests. The chosen colour is red, based on the soldier's red crest in the Pompeiian magistrate's court scene, the closest colour representation to the Flavian period depicted by the group.

Julius Caesar mentions that his men donned crests before going into battle. As the legionary helmets of the 1st century AD all carry crest mounts, this practice seems to



Rear view of subject (E) on the colour plates: an Imperial Gallic 'H' helmet, with a deep skull and pronounced slope to the long neck guard.

have continued until at least the early 2nd century, when iron cross reinforcements were added to the skull, covering the crest mounts. This may have been a field modification during the Dacian Wars in response to the deadly scythe-like two-handed *falx*. In any case, surviving legionary helmets from the Trajanic period onward seem to have no crest fittings. There is no reason to completely dismiss the low box-type crests seen on so many 2nd century sculptures, however, as these could simply have been made of wood, glued on over the reinforces when needed, and would have left no archaeological evidence other than the sculptural record.

### PLATE BODY ARMOUR

The body armour most commonly worn by the reconstructed *Legio XIII*, as well as the several other Roman groups depicting what is basically the Flavian period, is the familiar 'banded' armour commonly referred to as the *lorica segmentata*. Although *lorica hamata* (ring mail) and *lorica squamata* (scale armour) are latin terms, we have no idea what the Romans actually called this armour. Author and Roman armourer Michael Simkins coined the term '*lorica laminata*', a more correct latin term than '*segmentata*'. The legionaries themselves probably nicknamed this armour for whatever their soldier's term was for a lobster, crayfish, or even wingless cockroach, as the segmented abdomen sections of these arthropods closely resemble this armour's construction.

There was much speculation as to how this armour was made until the spectacular discovery in 1964 of a chest containing elements of at least six cuirasses at Corbridge, England. Three minor variations of this armour were discerned, basically differing in the methods of attaching the upper and lower sections (hooks versus buckles).

Although this was the only site where this armour has been found in a reasonably complete state, the tell-tale cupric alloy buckles, hinges, hooks and loops are a common find on 1st century Roman military sites

throughout Europe, indicating its widespread use. However, until recently it was generally believed that this armour was only characteristic of 'Western' legionaries, those in the East being more likely to wear scale or ring mail armour. This is largely due to the absence of the laminated cuirass from the Trajanic-date Adamaklissi monument in Romania, which depicts legionaries in scale or ring mail armour only.

This writer had the exciting privilege of disproving that theory while working as a volunteer in the excavation of Gamala on the Golan Heights of Israel in 1983. Gamala was a Galilean stronghold reduced in 67 AD by Vespasian's legions during the Jewish War. After I had demonstrated some knowledge in the identification of Roman military equipment, the site director, Mr Shamyra Gutman, gave me permission to examine the finds from the previous season housed at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. The artifacts included a tinned bronze cheekplate and brow-guard, the former nearly identical to a Coolus 'C' helmet from Lichtenstein; an iron dagger handle; the metal tip to a 'Pompeii' type *gladius* scabbard; and numerous arrow and catapult dart heads. There was also a small carton of heavily oxidised iron fragments which the technician was reluctant to show, believing they were 'really nothing'.

While carefully removing the fragments, my heart jumped when I recognised among the red oxidation the green patinated, unmistakably shaped lobate hinges of a Corbridge type cuirass. Then other fragments emerged with the equally typical Corbridge strap buckles; and from the type and quantity of pieces it seemed

this was one complete shoulder half the largest find of this armour since the discovery of the Corbridge hoard. The technician was mystified by my unexpected ecstasy over these seemingly insignificant chunks of metal, but fortunately a copy of *The Armour of Imperial Rome* was in the reference library. After comparing pictures of Robinson's reconstructions with the clearly discernible cupric alloy fittings from Gamala, she too seemed quite happy over the discovery. I do not know if these finds were ever restored or exhibited; it seemed clear that the Israeli archaeologists were far more interested in the artifacts once belonging to the Jewish patriots rather than their Roman oppressors.

In any event, the Gamala find proves that the Corbridge type laminated plate cuirass was known literally from one end of the Roman Empire to the other during the Flavian period depicted by the *Legio XIII* reconstruction group.

Therefore it is firmly established as the principal legionary armour used by the unit, though correctly made scale and mail armour are also in use.

When Robinson first wrote *The Armour of Imperial Rome* it was believed that the simpler laminated cuirass from Newstead also dated to the late 1st century AD. As it was easier to construct, and to show diversity of equipment, *Legio XIII* also reconstructed and used this type of armour in the past. A recent re-examination of the find, however, revealed that its loss date is probably closer to the middle of the 2nd century AD. Pending any additional find which may establish its definite use in the late 1st century, this armour had now been withdrawn from use.

### MAIL AND SCALE

Although the laminated iron cuirass is the armour most identified with the Roman legionary, ring mail — originally a Celtic invention — was by far the most prolific of all



Roman helmets must have had some sort of lining, and the absence from the archaeological record of any original skulls with rivet or lace holes for attachment suggests that a fabric lining may have been glued into place. This is an entirely speculative reconstruction, using felt; there is fragmentary archaeological evidence for this, however, and for linen lining to cheek pieces. Note the small ring under the centre of the neckguard, which — with those on the cheek pieces — allowed a chin thong to hold the helmet fairly stable on the head.



A



(A) Reconstruction of a Corbridge 'B' cuirass, with hook-and-loop fastening between the collar and shoulder sections and the girdle section. The Corbridge 'B' has seven, rather than eight pairs of girdle plates. Note that the lower two lack front lacing brackets, presumably so as not to interfere with the metal-plated belt worn over them, sometimes in pairs.

(B) Reconstructed Corbridge 'A' cuirass from the rear — not an angle much seen in the sculptural record. Compare with the front view; while the chest is protected by large single left and right 'collar' plates, the upper back has three pairs of overlapping laminae. This point still causes confusion — it is not unknown for museums to display reconstructions back to front.

(C) & (D) Imperial Gallie 'G' type helmet, popular among reconstruction

B



groups. The only intact original was found in the Rhine at Mainz, and is now exhibited at Worms. Fragments of this type have also been found at Colchester, England, in levels dated to Boudicca's revolt in the early 60s AD.

(E) The Imperial Gallie 'H', differing most obviously from the 'G' in the size and angle of the neckguard. The best original example is from Lech, near Augsburg.

(F) The Imperial Gallie 'D' discussed in the text, with its elaborate bronze sheet decoration in the form of eagles holding victory wreaths, and temples. Mainz and nearby Hofheim have yielded the best intact example and two other finds which may be associated with it; so this is not, as may appear, a unique 'fancy' headgear procured by some exhibitionist legionary with a donative burning a hole in his purse...







Rear view of subject (F) on the colour plates: the elaborately decorated Imperial Italic 'D'. Note the deep bronze band running round the base of the skull, and the 'temple and altar' ornaments.

style.

Scale armour is possibly the oldest of all metal body armours, dating at least to the 2nd millennium BC. Despite its great antiquity it was used throughout the entire Roman period, and up to modern times. In *Legio XIII*, as with mail shirts, it is primarily reserved for specialist such as the *cornicen*, the *signifer*, and auxiliary impressions, the legionaries being largely equipped with the Corbridge pattern cuirass.

Generally, scale armour is inferior to mail, which raises the question of why it seems from the sculptural record to have been so popular with centurions, and higher ranking officers (even including emperors, sometimes portrayed in this defence). While these can be dismissed as simply parade armours, some may actually have been a combination of scale and mail which may be what is referred to as '*lorica plumata*' by ancient writers. A few examples of such armour have come to light, with the links and scales so light and small that they were probably reserved for dress occasions. *Legio XIII* has constructed a more substantial version of this armour for their *centurio* impression which would be a practical field armour, made up of over 7,000 ribbed and tin-plated iron scales attached to a 5mm ring mail base. Though heavier than any of the unit's other armours, it is both the most protective and attractive, and may be a valid representation of a centurion's 'field armour'.

VI

Roman armour types, in use by the Romans from at least as early as the Second Punic War against Hannibal to the fall of the Roman Empire six centuries later.

Reasonably correct ring mail is one of the greatest shortcomings of the various Roman (and Medieval) reconstruction groups. While no group can be expected to afford the time and expense required to equip their troops with alternate-link punched and riveted mail such

as the Romans actually used, most groups are still guilty of making their 'budded ring' mail with links considerably larger than any encountered in Roman archaeology. Ring size varies from as small as 3mm to 9mm outside diameter at the largest, and in this latter size from post-1st century AD sites. Rings from 5-7mm could be considered typical for 1st century mail. It is small wonder, then, that most replica mail shirts have rings well exceeding

a 10mm diameter, as three or four could be made in the time it would take to make one shirt of 5mm rings.

While some of *Legio XIII's* mail shirts were hand-linked with rings of 6mm or less, because of the incredible effort required by this method they have been supplemented by buying in relatively inexpensive original Turkish or Persian mail shirts with equally small rings, which in one case is actually punched and riveted in Roman

**To be continued:** The next part of this series will deal with weapons.

#### Note

A new book by the author of this article — '*The Roman Legions Recreated in Colour Photographs*' — is published this month by Windrow & Greene Ltd., 5 Gerrard St., London W1V 7LJ (tel: 071-287-4570, fax: 071-494-3869). A 96-page large format paperback illustrated with some 120 colour photographs of members of all the main Roman reconstruction groups and their gear, the book is priced at £12.95 + 10% UK P&P. Trade orders please quote ISBN 1 872004 06 7.

# The Cape Mounted Riflemen: Some Personalities

R.G. HARRIS

**A** respected archivist and uniform historian contributes some further material relevant to Ian Castle's article in 'MI' No.38 on the Cape Mounted Riflemen, 1827-1870.

I enjoyed the splendid article by Ian Castle, and his choice of illustrations, including the excellent double page colour spread by R. Scollins. In my own collection I am fortunate enough to own several photographs of named groups, including the 1866 group reproduced in 'MI' No.38 on page 38; and some of the latter, reorganised unit of 1878. It may be of some interest to readers to have a few comments on some of the personalities of 1866 and later.

## THE 1866 GROUP

This shows six Other Ranks standing at the rear; and one row of standing and one row of seated officers. Numbering the officers in the standing row from left to right, '1' to '7' respectively, and the seated row '8' to '13', we have the following identifications; the first date in parentheses is that of first commission, the second, where present, that of present

rank or appointment:

(1) Ensing Frederic R. Harvey (20 June 1865); (2) Ensing Arthur Hales (18 Oct. 1859); (3) Veterinary Surgeon Thomas Paton (15 Aug. 1855); (4) Captain George Francis Morant (18 April 1856; 11 Feb. 1862); (5) Quarter Master Charles Linton (5 June 1866); (6) Ensign Charles St. Clare Pote (14 Feb. 1860); (7) Riding Master Clark Morris (5 June 1855); (8) Instructor of Musketry, Ensign Caleb Collins (29 Jan. 1861; 20 May 1865); (9) Captain J. Fichtat Boyes (3 Jan. 1845; 10 April 1857); (10) Major John M'Donnell (28 June 1844; 20 Dec. 1864); (11) Lieutenant Edward Yewd Brabant (13 June 1856; 11 March 1859); (12) Lieutenant Charles Currie (27 Sept. 1856; 1 July 1859); (13) Adjutant, Ensign Hamilton Sabine Pasley (16 Dec. 1859; 18 Oct. 1869).

The Commanding Officer in 1866, unfortunately absent

at the time of the group photograph, was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Newport Tinley. *Hart's Army List*: 'Colonel Tinley served in the campaign against the Rajah of Coorg in 1834. He was also present in the battle of Maharajpore, 29th Dec. 1843 (Medal) and was severely wounded. Served at the siege and fall of Sebastopol in 1855; commanded the 39th Regt. in the attack on the 18th June; and commanded the trench guard, left attack, where a strong sortie of 2000 Russians was made against the chevaux de frise, Woronzoff Road, on the night of the 2nd August, and which was successfully repulsed; also present at the attack on the 8th September. (Medal and clasp, Knight of the Legion of Honor, 5th Class of the Medjidie, and Turkish medal).'<sup>(1)</sup>

The second in command in 1866 was Major John M'Donnell, No.10 in the group: 'Major M'Donnell served throughout the Kaffir War of 1846-47 (Medal), during which he commanded several successful skirmishing parties. Led the successful attack under Sir George Berkeley against a large body of Kaffirs posted in one of their strongest positions at the Sohoto Mountain, where they treacherously murdered Major Baker and four other officers two days previously. Was present in the action with the

defeat of the insurgent Boers at Boem Plaats 29th August 1848, and on Major Armstrong being severely wounded he commanded the Cape Mounted Riflemen during the latter part of the engagement.'

On Major M'Donnell's right, at No.9, is Captain Boyes: 'Captain Boyes served throughout the Kaffir War of 1846-47, including the action of the Gwanga (Medal). Also in the Kaffir War of 1851-53.'

At No.4 is Captain Morant: 'Served with the 12th Lancers in the campaigns of 1858-59 with the Saugor and Nerbudda field force, and was present at the affairs of Geegunge and Kobrai, battle of Banda, relief of Kirwee, action on the heights of Punwarree, and at several minor affairs (Medal).'

It will be noticed that the contrasting black facings on the cuffs of the officers' rifle green stable jackets can be seen clearly; and that the Adjutant, Ensign Pasley at No.13 position, has the black leather sabretache carrying a Regimental badge in silver plated white metal, sabretaches being restricted for wear by field officers and the Adjutant only. Several officers are shown wearing the old type of jacket with the small ball stud fastenings.

*Group of CMR officers photographed at King William's Town, 1870 - see text for key and identifications.*





*Lt. W.H.B. Phillips, commanding the CMR contingent sent to London to take part in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, June 1897.*

Of the six Other Ranks standing at the rear, three have medals; unfortunately one cannot be certain about these, but there is one interesting exception, i.e. the second man from the left. It is very likely that this man had previous service with the British Army as he has a Mutiny Medal and one for China. On his right a senior NCO proudly displays the crossed rifles badge on his right cuff. Impossible to detect on a reproduced photograph but just discernible on the original under magnification is a Colour Sergeant's oval arm badge on the right upper sleeve. It is not possible to see any definite design but this would most probably follow the pattern of that used in the Rifle Brigade<sup>(2)</sup>. Unlike the Rifle Brigade pattern, however, it would seem that no gold lace is incorporated, the wreath and central devices being worked in dark colours.

#### **AN 1870 GROUP**

Reproduced here is another photograph, which records an important event in the history of the CMR. This group was photographed in January 1870 at King William's Town just prior to leaving for England after final disbandment of the Regiment. Six of the officers present appeared in the 1866 group. One man – Tarrant, at No.8 – is not shown on the officers' list, but was the Medical Officer. It will be seen that a few officers wear the grey patrol jacket. The back row is numbered for identification here from left to right, '1' to '6'; the central seated row, '7' to '12'; and the three officers seated on the ground in the foreground, '13' to '15':

(1) Ensign Charles Edward Warde (2 Jan. 1869); (2) Ensign George James Crossdale (8 June 1867); (3) Ensign Smith Hamington Gardner (1 Feb. 1868); (4) QM Charles Linton (as above); (5) Captain Arthur Hales (as above/2 Jan. 1869); (6) Ensign George Bennett (20 April 1867; Lt. 5 Jan. 1870); (7) April 1863; 4 March 1868); (8)



Dr. Tarrant; (9) Captain Charles Van Notten Pole (14 Aug. 1846; Bt. Maj. 9 Sept. 1864); (10) Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Edward Knight (17 Sept. 1850; 1 May 1866); (11) Lieutenant Edward Yewd Brabant (as above); (12) Major Charles Currie (as above/2 Jan. 1869); (13) Paymaster Frank Potter (25 Sept. 1860; 1 May 1867); (14) Lieutenant Frederic Rosengrave Harvey (20 June 1865; 2 Jan. 1869); (15) Veterinary Surgeon Thomas Paton (as above/31 Aug. 1866).

The Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Knight, served with the 17th Lancers in the Central India Campaign in 1858-59, including the action at Burode (Medal).

A few of the returning officers were to continue a military career. Lt. Col. Knight was given command of a Brigade Depot at Derby, with full colonel's rank from 11 May 1870. Capt. Hales and Lt. Gardner went to Irish regiments, the 27th Inniskilling Fusiliers and 88th Connaught Rangers respectively, while Lt. Harvey joined a Scottish corps, the 90th Light Infantry. Thomas Paton was appointed Veterinary Surgeon First Class to the Army Service Corps; and Lt. Warde to the 19th Hussars – he was also appointed ADC to Sir Fenwick Williams, the celebrated defender of Kars in the Crimean War.

## CAPE MOUNTED RIFLEMEN (COLONIAL)

It has already been stated how from 1870 the unit first raised in 1855, the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police, was reorganised after the Ninth Kaffir War 1877-78 and given the old Imperial title of Cape Mounted Riflemen. It inherited the motto 'Aucto Splendore Resurgo', and the White Horse of Hanover, formerly on Standard and Guidon<sup>(3)</sup>. At about the same time police ranks were abolished and Army titles introduced; thus FAM Police Inspectors became Captains, and Sub-Inspectors, Lieutenants. At first things did not go smoothly, as the following from the Regimental History<sup>(4)</sup> indicates:

'Some of the men, mostly young hands fresh from England, pretended to feel this change of police to army as a grievance, and sought to make capital out of it with a view to making better terms with the Government. A great deal of trouble ensued, resulting in the trial and conviction of several men who were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Most of the men concerned however soon saw the mistake they were making; they returned to duty and subsequently throughout the Moirosi and Basuto Rebellions proved themselves to be good and gallant soldiers.'

In 1897 the Regiment was invited to send a contingent to London for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June, the contingent consisting of an officer, a sergeant, two corporals and 12 riflemen. The officer in charge was Lt. W.H.B. Phillips, whose portrait we publish here. Phillips was a veteran soldier with over 20 years' service, receiving his commission in 1881. His medal with clasp indicates service in South Africa, 1877-79 – Gealeka, campaign and assault and capture of Moirosi's stronghold; operations in Basutoland 1889-91 – Defence of Mafeteng. His promotion has obviously been painfully slow, but in July 1897 he received the next step, Captain and Quarter Master, Hon. Major, an appointment he held with the rank of major until 1908.

Our third illustration shows the dismounted detachment of riflemen. The rifle green tunics were edged with black braid, while the sergeant had additional black braid across the chest and an officer's patent leather black shoulder belt with whistle, chain and plate.

On the day of the procession, 22 June, the mounted contingent cut quite a dash in their white helmets (without helmet plates) and contrasting dark uniforms. They also impressed the ladies. Under the heading 'What our Jubilee

men had to put up with', the Regimental Journal published a cartoon showing a rifleman escorting a lady through the park – she exclaiming, 'How well you speak English considering what a short time you have been in the country'.

The Regiment maintained a band, certainly from the 1890s, but it was disbanded in 1913. The drum banners were later lodged in the Anglican Cathedral, Capetown, together with a King's Colour presented in 1904 by HRIH Princess Christian. The Regiment became part of the Union Defence Force in 1913<sup>(5)</sup>. **MI**

### Notes:

(1) As a captain in the 39th Regiment, Newport Tinley appears in a group photograph by Fenton taken in the Crimea, reproduced *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research*, Vol. XVII, opp. p. 134.

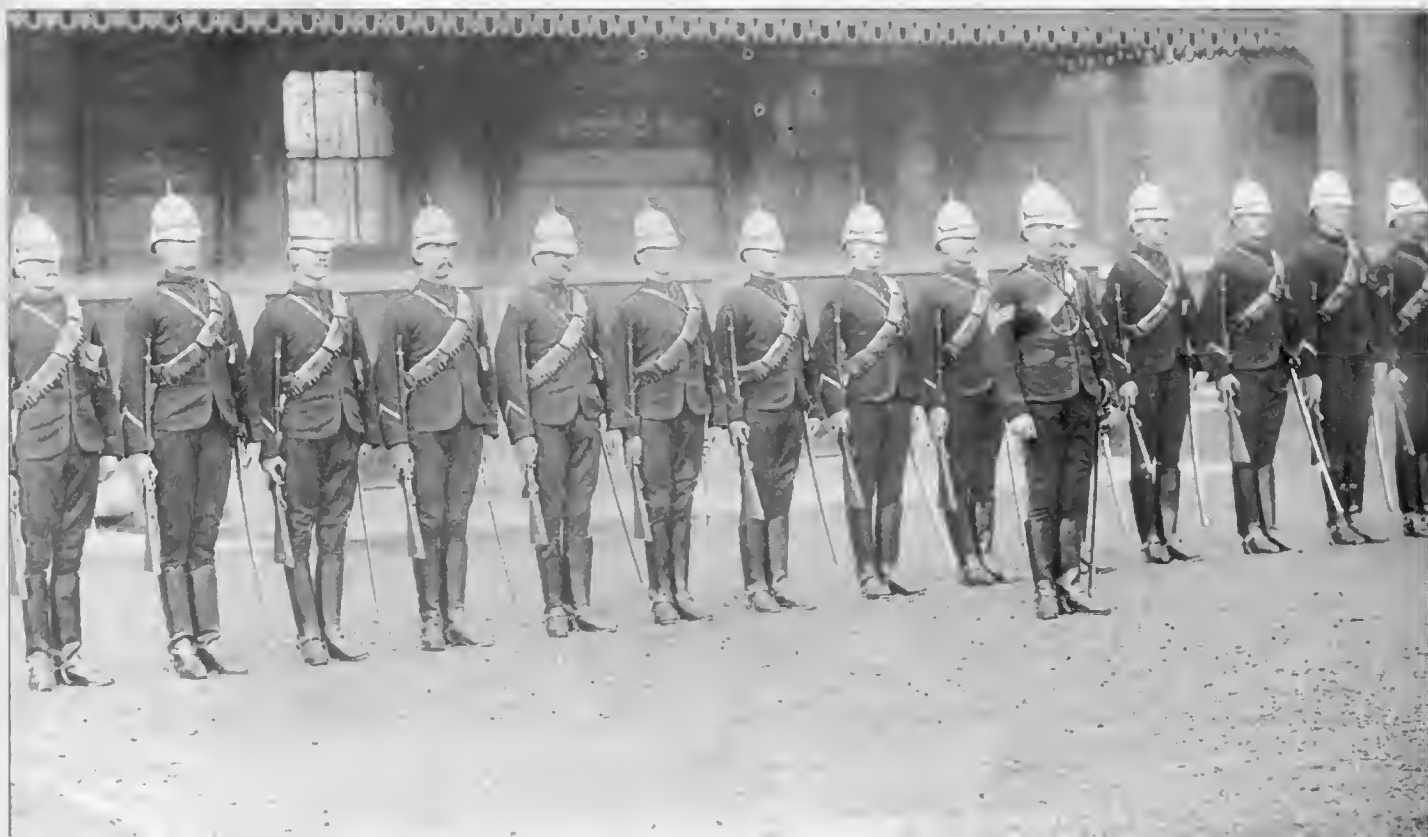
(2) Photograph of a colour sergeant's arm badge of the Rifle Brigade to be found in *Crimean Uniforms, British Infantry* (Fig. 54) by M. Barthorp, pub. Historical Research Unit, 1974; also colour plate by Pierre Turner of a Rifle Brigade Colour Sergeant 1854 (Fig. 54), *British Infantry Uniforms since 1660*, by M. Barthorp, Blandford 1982.

(3) See *Military Illustrated*, No. 38, July 1991; colour illustrations on pages 24/25.

(4) A monthly part-work published in 'The Qukamba', the Journal of the Cape Mounted Riflemen from 1899.

(5) *The Armed Forces of South Africa* by Major G. Tylden, Johannesburg 1954.

*The sergeant, two corporals and 12 riflemen of the reorganised CMR (ex-Frontier Armed and Mounted Police) sent to London for the 1897 Jubilee.*



## REVIEWS

continued from p.5

One can commend this attempt to cover world military history in a single book, although it can present problems. The dating of some effigies, for example, does not benefit from the latest theories. Also rather annoying is the absence of any museum object reference numbers for the numerous items illustrated. For anyone interested in the broad sweep this volume will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf. However, for those with more specialised interests the very scope prevents an in-depth study of any one area in either text or illustrations, and this is notably so with regard to Oriental subjects. Moreover, the rather high price may discourage those specialists who might have otherwise treated themselves to a copy. Nevertheless, this volume provides an attractive basic reference work and is enjoyable simply to browse through.

CG

**Osprey Men-at-Arms series; all 48pp., approx. 35 b/w illus., 8 colour plates; p/bk, £6.50. March publications:**

**MAA 243 'Rome's Enemies 5: The Desert Frontier' by David Nicolle, plates Angus McBride.**

This covers the peoples of North Africa, the Nile Valley (including out-reaching fingers of Ethiopian power), Southern Arabia, Central Arabia, Syria (including Palmyra) and Mesopotamia. Dr. Nicolle's familiar style is wide-ranging, covering political and social structure in as much as they affected military forces, as well as organisation, tactics, armour and weapons. The monochrome illustrations are an interesting mix of sculptural, ceramic, documentary, and graffiti evidence, architecture, detail drawings of archaeological finds, maps, etc. Mr. McBride's plates are, as usual, detailed and colourful, with a good sense of place and time. The choice of a 'boudoir' study of the king and queen of 3rd century Palmyra for the cover, rather than a more strictly military subject, seems odd — but is certainly eye-catching! A first rate addition to this particular 'series within the series' — recommended.

JS

**MAA 244 'The French Army in the American War of Independence' by René Chartrand, plates Francis Back.**

The author, a highly respected senior curator with Parks Canada, offers a concise guide to the forces which France deployed during the war not just to mainland North America, but also to the West Indies and (because they were all part of the same global strategy) to the East Indies and India as well; and the navy is included alongside the ground forces — metropolitan, colonial, and locally raised. This makes MAA 244 a very valuable primer, covering as it does some invariably ignored but interesting 'side issues' to the frequently published campaigns, e.g. Yorktown. Organi-

sation, uniforms, chronologies, and tables all combine into a pleasing, easy to follow, and thoroughly useful little book. The monochromes are first rate, mixing rare period sources with good reconstructions. Mr. Back's work has improved steadily since his first efforts in this series, and is now very good indeed. Recommended.

JS

**MAA 245 'British Territorial Units 1914-18' by Ray Westlake, plates Mike Chappell.**

Mr. Westlake is new to the series, but is a well-known specialist book dealer who has made a long-term study of the subject. His text is of great value to those attracted by, but not deeply versed in Great War matters: it explains simply and clearly the various categories of Territorial troops, and lists them unit by unit as they existed at the outbreak of war. He then follows through with the changes which occurred during the war, and a division-by-division guide giving brief campaign records. The photographs are excellent, and complement the short text on uniforms and badges well; and much more unit detail is found in the commentaries to Mr. Chappell's superb plates, which are generously packed with full figures, part-figures and insignia arrays. Two plates give representative pre-war types in full dress, the rest wartime examples — including such valuable choices as a nurse, a trench mortar unit soldier, a member of a cyclist battalion, a sniper with unit badges, etc., as well as more standard types. This is a feast, and highly recommended.

JS

**MA 246 'The Romanian Army of World War 2' by Mark Axworthy, plates Horia Serbanescu.**

Two new contributors to the series offer an unusual subject, notably well executed. The opening of Romanian archives since the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime has apparently made possible, for the first time, a clearer and more detailed study of Romania's part in the Eastern Front campaigns, long suppressed by the Communist authorities for obvious reasons. The text gives a detailed account of organisation and strength; several important battles in which Romanian troops were central to the outcome (and suffered accordingly) are described; and the plates commentaries give much more information on uniforms, insignia and equipment than has ever been seen before in the West. The plates do not match the skill of some of the regular illustrators of this series, but convey a lot of interesting detail; and when taken together with the monochrome photographs — which are all new, varied, well-chosen, and most interesting — they do their job very adequately. It is rare indeed to find something genuinely new about a World War 2 army; Osprey deserve congratulations for having the enterprise to publish this title, and the author and artist for having assembled such a good, fact-packed short guide.

JS

## GALLERY

### John Shaw

PHILIP J. HAYTHORNTHWAITHE  
Paintings by RICK SCOLLINS

Very few ordinary soldiers of the Napoleonic Wars achieved the widespread fame usually reserved for the commissioned officers. One notable exception was known universally at the time as 'Shaw the Lifeguardsman'.

John Shaw was born at a farmhouse between the villages of Cossall and Wollaton, Nottinghamshire, in 1789, the son of a small landowner. A delicate child, he was said to have profited from the advice of the local doctor who declared that milk would be of benefit, whereupon his father reserved one cow exclusively to provide milk for young John. After schooling (which, though basic, was quite unusual for a country boy), John was apprenticed to a joiner and wheelwright at Radford, near Nottingham, at the age of 13; but his 'pugnacious disposition' caused friction with his master, and he returned home to Cossall. After working for Lord Middleton at Wallaton Hall as a rough carpenter, at the age of 18 he enlisted in the 2nd Life Guards, at Nottingham Goose Fair on 15 October 1807.

At this date he stood six feet tall (subsequently he grew a further half inch), weighed 15 stone, and had light hair, grey eyes and 'round visage'. Through his education and

good conduct he was promoted to corporal (a rank in the Household Cavalry equivalent to sergeant), but his fame arose from another quarter.

When quartered at Portman Street barracks, Shaw was accosted by three local roughs indulging in the common pastime of mocking redcoats (demonstrating 'the vulgar insolence of the lower classes' according to Shaw's biographer<sup>(1)</sup>); Shaw took on all three, and after administering a sound beating put them to flight. This display was apparently so impressive that it marked Shaw as a likely candidate for the prize-ring — indeed, even before joining the army he had fought a contest near Wellaton, defeating a much larger man, and receiving encouragement from the legendary prizefighter Jem Belcher, who was present as a spectator.

*Shaw at Waterloo: the earliest depiction, in Kelly's The Memorable Battle of Waterloo, 1817. The helmet depicted is the 1812 pattern with horsehair mane, not that actually worn at Waterloo.*







Memorial in Cossall churchyard to Shaw and Richard Waplington of the 2nd Life Guards, and to Thomas Wheatley of the 23rd Light Dragoons.

## BARE KNUCKLE FIGHTER

At that date prizefighting was one of the country's principal sports, and patronized widely by the aristocracy; huge sums were wagered on the outcome of fights. Although conducted under established rules these were brutal in the extreme, matches continuing until one of the protagonists was battered senseless, or injured so severely as to be incapable of continuing. Prizefighting was doubtless popular among the aristocratic officers of the Guards, and Shaw was not the first Household Cavalryman to fight successfully in the prize ring: Noah James of the Royal Horse Guards achieved some celebrity, his fight with 'Wood of the Guards' lasting

76 minutes. James' eighteenth contest, in July 1800 against Andrew Gamble, beside the gibbet on Wimbledon Common, provides an example of the brutality of the 'sport'. In a fight lasting 50 minutes and 30 rounds, James fought on with a broken nose, jaw, collar-bone and breast-bone before he collapsed: 'James vomited a great deal of blood at almost every round towards the conclusion, and was taken for dead from the stage'<sup>(2)</sup>. The match was fought for a purse of 100 guineas, but bets of up to £6,000 were laid on the outcome.

On this stage John Shaw soon made his mark, defeating the celebrated American negro boxer Molyneaux in a 'friendly' contest (i.e. with

gloves), and similarly defeated Capt. Robert Barclay of Ury of the 23rd Fusiliers, the renowned pedestrian: but a few days later Shaw lost another gloved bout to Tom Belcher, Jem's brother.

In his first bare knuckle fight, on 12 July 1812 at Coombe Walden, against one Burrows, Shaw demonstrated his style — the 'retreating tactics' of the champion Tom Cribb — which proved so successful that Burrows retired after only 17 minutes, unable to see. This established Shaw's reputation, and he appears to have been permitted to train and practice almost full-time, until he issued a challenge to all England for the championship.

On 18 April 1815 he fought on Hounslow Heath against Ned Painter, a boxer so esteemed that the immortal Cribb acted as his second, but inferior to Shaw in height, weight and reach. As he had been released from Fleet prison only that morning Painter cannot have been in ideal condition, and following ten successive knock-down blows by Shaw he collapsed at the end of 28 minutes.

Shortly afterwards Shaw returned to Cossall on leave, with his fellow-villager and regimental comrade Richard Waplington (alias 'Dick Wap'), a man as big as Shaw and who had enlisted on the same occasion; together they were known as 'the Cossall Giants'. Shaw was now ready to challenge Cribb for the English championship; but exactly two months after the Painter fight, he was engaged in an even more desperate battle — Waterloo.

## THE LAST BOUT

At the commencement of the action Shaw was commanding a forage-party some distance away, but on hearing the first shots he hurried to rejoin his regiment. There was conflicting accounts of his actions during the battle, including a rather unlikely story about him capturing a French 'Eagle' but being forced to relinquish it; a similar story is told of Waplington.

Siborne recounts how Shaw fought with such skill that he slew nine Cuirassiers 'within an incredibly short space of time'; but was then shot by a Cuirassier's carbine, which 'deprived Shaw of that life which his powerful arm and gallant daring had made proof against the swords of all who ventured to approach him'<sup>(3)</sup>.

This does not accord with other evidence. The version given in his biography is perhaps the most authentic, despite the melodramatic phrasing:

'In the *mêlée* he found himself isolated, and surrounded by *ten* of the enemy's horsemen. Whirling his good blade swiftly around, he for a time keeps his foes at bay. At length his sword breaks in his hand; but Shaw will not give in. Hurling the hilt of his now useless weapons from him, he tears his helmet from his head, and tries to use it as a cestus. The Cuirassiers now close in upon him, and the heroic Guardsman is struck to the earth, and they ride off exulting in the thought that they have at length avenged the hecatomb of Frenchmen who have fallen victims to Shaw's slaughtering right hand'<sup>(4)</sup>.

Christopher Kelly's *The Memorable Battle of Waterloo* (London 1817) includes an anecdote presumably derived from the witness, though not identifying the subject as the famous prizefighter. Another Life Guard, having been wounded and captured, was dragged by the French for some distance until his captors absconded, whereupon the wounded man collapsed on a dunghill. As he lay semi-conscious he was roused by someone he recognised as 'a gallant comrade, named Shaw, who could scarcely crawl to the heap, being almost cut to pieces: "Ah, my dear fellow, I'm done for!" faintly whispered the latter'. When the wounded man next awoke, he found Shaw beside him, 'lying dead, with his face leaning on his hand... This brave man is said to have carried destruction to every Frenchman against whom he rode; and to have killed a number of the

Cuirassiers, sufficient to make a show against the list of slain furnished for any of Homer's heroes. His death was occasioned rather by the loss of blood from a variety of wounds, than the magnitude of any one; he had been riding about, fighting, a great part of the day, with his body streaming<sup>(9)</sup>.

Although it is difficult to reconcile the various accounts of Shaw's actions, it is clear that he enjoyed some celebrity in the army even before his exploits at Waterloo. Thomas Morris of the 73rd had Shaw pointed out to him on the battlefield, and claimed that Shaw had drunk 'a considerable portion' of raw gin, 'and under the influence of that probably, he soon afterwards left his regiment, and running 'a-muck' at the enemy, was cut down by them as a madman'. In Morris' opinion, 'Shaw certainly falls very far short of my definition of the term *hero*', as he thought that Shaw would have been of more use had he remained in the ranks instead of charging (as Morris thought), in such a manner as to be as much a suicide as if he had jumped off the cliffs of Dover<sup>(10)</sup>.

Yet another account is given by Gronow, who presumably got the tale from his friend Capt. Edward Kelly; Gronow states that Shaw fought alongside Kelly until he 'was killed by a thrust through the body by a French colonel of Cuirassiers, who in his turn received a blow from Kelly's sword, which cut through his helmet and stretched him lifeless upon the ground'<sup>(11)</sup>.

Shaw's pre-battle fame may lend credence to the story that Sgt. Maj. Cotton, later proprietor of the famous Waterloo Museum, was able to recognise him and was present at his burial near La Haye Sainte, and later at the exhumation of the body, after which a skull attributed as Shaw's was presented to the Royal United Service Institution. (A tourist, shown Shaw's grave at La Haye Sainte, was told by a guide — presumably Cotton — that after death the body was recognizable by its 'extraordinary muscular

development, and appearance of vast strength.'<sup>(12)</sup>

Shaw's fame was transitory; and not until 1877 was a monument raised, in Cossall churchyard, to Shaw, Waplington and Thomas Wheatley of the 23rd Light Dragoons, all Cossall men who fought at Waterloo. Wheatley is buried at Cossall; Waplington fell at Waterloo. Yet Shaw's memory has never died completely in his native area, and has been remembered recently in a work on the speech and history of the Ilkeston district<sup>(13)</sup>.

#### Uniform (see Richard Scollins' reconstructions on rear cover):

The full and service dress of the Household Cavalry were considerably different. The scarlet dress jacket, of the style introduced for heavy cavalry in 1812, had dark blue facings (a number of contemporary pictures show a scarlet collar with blue patch), with lace edging on the front of the collar, upper edge of the cuffs, down the breast and around the turnbacks, the jacket closed by hooks and eyes. The service jacket was very different, almost devoid of lace and with buttons on the breast. The scarlet collar had a blue patch upon which were set two gold loops; an extant garment of the 1st Life Guards shows a small amount of red above the patch, but this is not confirmed by contemporary illustrations, and may have been a distinction of the 1st Regiment<sup>(14)</sup>. The shallow

cuffs bore two gold loops; turnbacks and shoulder straps were plain blue.

The white breeches and long boots of full dress were replaced by grey overalls on service, shown with a red stripe by sauerweid, but with four brass buttons at the ankle and trefoil knots on the thighs by Norblin. In both orders of dress a yellow girdle with red stripes was worn, as were white leather waist and shoulder belts, the latter supporting a black leather pouch bearing an oval brass plate with embossed royal arms, and the former a black leather sabretache with two slings and an eight-pointed brass star badge, the centre bearing a reversed 'GR' within a crowned Garter.

The helmet was that introduced on 12 March 1812, with the original horsehair mane replaced in 1814 by a red and blue woollen crest. Although it may be that at some time during the Napoleonic Wars the Household Cavalry carried a sabre with a brass 'ladder' hilt, there is no doubt that in 1815 the ordinary 1796 pattern heavy cavalry sabre was carried: a known example is marked to the 2nd Life Guards.<sup>(15)</sup>

Rank distinction was in the form of lace edging to the shoulder straps and three gold chevrons on the right upper arm. Uniquely in the

Household Cavalry, there existed only three ranks between private and commissioned officer: quartermaster, corporal, and (from 1804) corporal-major; the latter equated to regimental sergeant-major, corporal to the rank of sergeant, hence the use of three chevrons. A Dighton illustration of c.1820 shows a crown over the chevrons, probably a regimental badge rather than a badge of rank; the corporal-major presumably had four chevrons, perhaps with a crown, to equate the badge with that of sergeant-major<sup>(12)</sup>.

Shaw's hair at Waterloo was probably cropped very short, as this had been the universal style for prizefighters since the famous occasion when 'Gentleman John' Jackson had defeated Daniel Mendoza by holding him down by his long hair.

MI

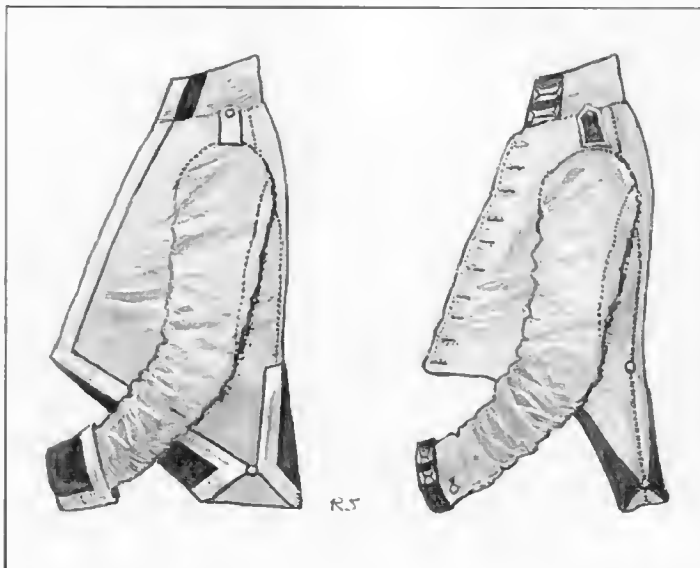
#### Acknowledgements

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#### Notes:

- (1) *Shaw, the Life Guardsman*, Maj. Knollys, ed. J. Potter Briscoe, London 1885 (the only biography), p.10.
- (2) *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1802, Vol.70p.788.
- (3) *History of the War in France and Belgium in 1815*, W. Siborne, London 1844, IIp.24.
- (4) Knollys, p.45.
- (5) Kelly, p.94.
- (6) Morris' account was reprinted as *Thomas Morris: the Napoleonic Wars*, ed. J. Selby, London 1967, pp.76-77.
- (7) *Recollections and Anecdotes*, R.H.Gronow, combined edn., London 1864, p.196.
- (8) *History of Ilkeston, together with Shipley, Kirk Hallam, West Hallam, Dale Abbey, and Cossall*, E. Trueman, Ilkeston 1880, p.95; this contains a brief memoirs of Shaw.
- (9) *Ey Up Mi Duck!*, E.Scollins & J.S.Titford, Ilkeston 1976.
- (10) See *Waterloo Uniforms: British Cavalry*, J.Mollo, London 1973, p.18.
- (11) See *Swords of the British Army*, B.Robson, London 1975, pp.96-97.
- (12) See *Badges of Warrant and Non-Commissioned Rank in the British Army*, N.P.Dawney, London 1949 (SAHR), pp.32-33.

Schematic drawings of (left) Life Guards full dress jacket, and (right) service dress — cf. colour reconstructions on rear cover. (Rick Scollins)





# John Shaw

Full dress,  
London 1815

Service dress,  
Waterloo,  
18 June 1815

